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A

VIEW

OF THE

LAST JUDGMENT.

By JOHN SMITH,

One of the MINISTERS of CAMPBELTON.

ACTS i. 11.—*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner.*

LUKE xxi. 28.—*Then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

——Forthwith from all winds
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past ages, to the general doom
Shall hasten. MILTON.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for C. ELLIOT; and T. CADELL
and G. ROBINSON, LONDON.

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LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

By JOHN SMITH,

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THE PREFACE.

THE ſubject of which the following pages treat, is of infinite importance, and of univerſal concern. This is ſufficient to recommend it to the ſerious. But how ſhall we fix the thoughtleſs and the gay? Could we perſuade ſuch to peruſe theſe ſheets even with the low view of amuſement, we hope they would not be diſappointed. Yet we build not our hopes on any ornament in the dreſs, or any novelty in the ſtyle. We build them all upon the grandeur of the theme, which exhibits a ſcene of glory and of terror that cannot fail of pleaſing and intereſting the mind of man.

The Diſſolution of the World, the Reſurrection, and the Judgment, with all the variety of awful circumſtances which accompany thoſe events, preſent to the imagination ſo great and glorious a proſpect, that even the giddy and the gay, as well as the thoughtful and the ſerious, might well place the contemplation of them in the firſt rank of their entertainments. To ſee peaſants crowned, and emperors dethroned; vir-

tue triumphant, and vice confounded; ſeldom fails to engage the attention, and "harrow up" the ſtrongeſt emotions of the ſoul, even in a fictitious repreſentation. Why then ſhould not theſe matters be more powerfully engaging when they are real, as ſhall be the caſe in that grand review of characters which is to take place on this World's ſtage, when Life's poor play is over?

But we do not, perhaps, recommend this important ſubject to ſome, when we ſay it is no fiction. Yet, ſince they who dread a future judgment moſt, can by no means avoid it, their wiſeſt courſe is to render it familiar to their thoughts, and to make every poſſible preparation for its coming. Then may they look forward to *that day* with exceeding joy; and, when it ſhall actually arrive, they can, amidſt all its awful terrors, *lift up their heads and rejoice, becauſe their redemption draweth nigh.* To every ſignal that ſhall announce the gradual approach of the Judge, they ſhall echo with a loud and glad reſponſe, *Amen; even ſo come, Lord Jeſus!*

CON.

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A VIEW OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

CHAP. I.

Of the Circumſtances that ſhall precede the Laſt Judgment.

§ 1. The ſubject introduced from the account of our Lord's aſcenſion, and from the promiſe of his ſecond coming. § 2. The proofs of this event briefly ſtated. § 3. The ſigns, in the moral and in the natural ſyſtem, which ſhall precede the diſſolution of the World and the laſt Judgment. § 4. The reſurrection—of the juſt—and of the unjuſt. § 5. The appearance and deſcent of the Judge and of his attendants. § 6. The different feelings of the good and of the bad on this occaſion, with the appearance of both before the ſupreme Tribunal.

§ 1. WHEN our Saviour had finiſhed the great work for which he came into the world, and adjuſted every

thing for his returning to that glory which, for our ſake, he left for a ſeaſon, he led out his diſciples from Jeruſalem as far as Bethany. There, while he was yet ſpeaking to them, a bright cloud caught him up out of their ſight into heaven. And if this, as the ſcriptures intimate[a], was done in a manner though not equally ſplendid and magnificent, yet ſomewhat ſimilar to that in which he ſhall one day come again *in clouds, when every eye ſhall ſee him*[b], how glorious muſt the ſcene have been! *The chariots of* God, according to the words of ancient prophecy, were on this occaſion *twenty thouſand, even thouſands of angels*[c]. And could the eyes of the diſciples have penetrated that cloud which intercepted Jesus from their view, how glorious the proceſſion they ſhould have then beheld! Thouſands of thouſands and ten thouſand times ten thouſand of the holy hoſts of heaven, a glad train, ſurround the Son of God! Legions of cherubs are his convoy home, myriads

[a] Acts i. 11. with Mat. xxv. 31. [b] Rev. i. 7.
[c] Pſ. lxviii. 17, 18.

myriads of ſeraphs welcome back their Lord.

If there is joy in heaven when only one penitent, though of the meaneſt of rational creatures, is added to the number of the bleſſed, what ſacred joy, what univerſal rejoicings, muſt have been there, when Jeſus himſelf, the Head of angels and principalities, the Lord of glory, returned thither, after having ſubdued his enemies, triumphed over Death and Hell, and ſaved millions, even a world, of miſerable ſinners! With what loud hallelujahs and glad hoſannahs would all the bleſſed hoſts welcome their returning Lord, while he *led captivity captive*, and uſhered into bliſs myriads, perhaps, of happy ſouls, who might have been in longing expectations of attending, on this day, their Redeemer's triumph! With what ecſtaſy would the congratulating choirs above ſing, on this occaſion, that triumphant ſong of the Pſalmiſt, "Ye gates, lift up your heads on high! ye doors that laſt for ay, be lifted up, that ſo the King of glory may enter in[a]!" Their

[a] Pſ. xxiv. 7.

number, as in the Apocalyptic viſion, was thouſands of thouſands, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand; and all fell down and worſhipped him, crying with a loud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain, to receive bleſſing and honour and dominion and power and victory.*—Yes! reply with peculiar joy and ecſtaſy the human ſouls that were ranſomed; *for he died for* US, *and redeemed us to be kings and prieſts to* GOD *for ever*[a].

But mark the love and condeſcenſion of our dear Redeemer! Amidſt the congratulations of all theſe millions of ſeraphic ſpirits, and, what is infinitely more, the unſpeakable joy of his Father's glorious preſence, the diſconſolate diſciples on the hill of Bethany are not forgotten. Two of the angels who ſurround the throne of GOD are ſent down to comfort them with the promiſe of their Lord's ſecond coming. Theſe benevolent ſpirits, like their Maſter, are willing to lay aſide for a ſeaſon their ſhare in the heavenly glory, for the pleaſure of *miniſtring* to thoſe who are *heirs of ſalvation.*

[a] Rev. v. 9—12.

salvation. With that speed wherewith they descended, perhaps ten thousand times, on errands of love to him that reads, and to him that hears, they wing their flight to Bethany: and while the disciples were yet looking, with a mixture of grief and wonder, towards heaven, they say unto them, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same* JESUS *who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*[a].

How seasonable was this comfort! Adam's dejected state of mind when he first saw the natural sun disappear and leave the world in night, without a prospect of the cheerful return of day, would but faintly represent the sorrow of this mournful band when the *Sun of righteousness* had withdrawn from their sight his beams, and left them forlorn and friendless in a persecuting world. But he, whose consolations never fail to come when his people stand most in need of them, at that very instant remembered them.—Even so, thou

[a] Acts i. 11.

art ſtill mindful of us, O LORD, in thy exalted ſtate! Thine eye and thine ear are open to our wants; thy hand and thy voice are lifted up to the Father in our behalf; and thy miniſtring ſpirits are every moment commiſſioned down to bring us aid and comfort. Our truſt is in thy atonement, interceſſion, and love; and our comfort and joy, in the hope of thy ſecond coming, O JESUS our Redeemer!

§ 2. THAT this ſame JESUS, whom the heavens, as we have ſeen, have received *until the time of the reſtitution of all things*, and whom, in conjunction with the Father and the Spirit, we make the ſole object of all our religious worſhip, ſhall come into this world again, on the LAST DAY, *to judge both the quick and the dead*, and to paſs a final ſentence on every individual of the race of Adam;—that this, I ſay, ſhall happen, it is not my purpoſe at preſent to ſpend much time in proving. I am willing to believe that they are very few who are not firmly perſuaded of this important truth already. For, Heaven has

not

not allowed the evidence for it to remain dark or doubtful. Convictions, clear as ſun beams, break in from every ſide, upon the mind that is diſpoſed to receive them. We need only open our eyes, to behold the light of a Judgment-day already dawning around us.——Whence the general belief which has prevailed every where in the world, reſpecting a future reckoning? And why did mankind in every age ſo univerſally agree in going into the opinion? The Barbarian and the Greek, the ſavage and the civilized, thoſe of the moſt diſtant ages and countries, the moſt untutored, as well as the moſt learned,—all agree in the notion and belief of a judgment to come. This, like an univerſal principle, ſeems to have been interwoven with our very frame and conſtitution, by the Great Author of our nature. To find out this truth requires no reſearches of divinity or philoſophy, no cultivation of mind, no depth of genius. It obtrudes itſelf upon the conſcience of every one ſo forcibly, that none, if he would, can poſſibly baniſh the thoughts

of it at all ſeaſons. A day of retribution the good muſt often view with pleaſure; the bad, with fear and terror. The injured feel, in the worſt ſituation, a ſenſible relief when they appeal to it; and they who wrong them, feel alſo that ſuch an appeal has a very ſerious meaning. Hence Socrates, aſſured that his cauſe ſhould be tried again at a more equitable bar, drank the poiſoned cup with as little concern as if he had been with his friends at a ſocial banquet: And, for the ſame reaſon, thouſands of martyrs exulted with joy in the midſt of thoſe flames which their bloody perſecutors and tyrants kindled. On the other hand, Felix trembled at the very ſound of the judgment; and Tiberius, at the thoughts of it, pined with anguiſh on the throne of a great empire.—Now, may not theſe ſuggeſtions and impreſſions of nature, theſe forebodings of conſcience, be conſidered as certain indications of a future judgment? —The bluſhes of the morning are not a ſurer evidence that the light of the day is approaching.

What,

What, again, are we to conclude from the unequal diſtribution of good and evil which at preſent appears under the adminiſtration of that righteous and holy Being who governs the world? Can it be ſuppoſed that a time is not to come when thoſe inequalities ſhall be fully adjuſted, and thoſe clouds that ſurround the throne of GOD entirely diſpelled? *The judgments of* GOD in the preſent world *are* often *a great deep*. All things ſeem to happen alike to all. For, though the natural tendency of virtue be to happineſs, and of vice to miſery, yet the influence of that tendency, powerful and extenſive as it is, is ſo counteracted in its operations, or retarded in its effects, that, in this life, there is often *one event to the righteous and to the wicked*. Nay, ſometimes it fares worſe, in outward appearance at leaſt, with *him that ſacrificeth*, than with *him that ſacrificeth not* [a]. Many of the former, *of whom the world was not worthy*, *have been deſtitute*, *afflicted*, *tormented* [b]; while many of the latter *are not*

[a] Eccleſ. ix. 2. [b] Heb. xi. 37, 38.

not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men [a]. Treaſon and villanies are often crowned with ſucceſs, and triumphs and victories attend the enſigns of the uſurper and tyrant. The juſt is made a prey to the ſons of violence, who *ſpend their days in wealth, and go down to the grave* [b] without any ſignal judgment overtaking them: They lay down their heads upon peaceful pillows, and retire from the world in pompous and ſolemn funerals. Whereas, perſecuted virtue toils againſt the ſtream, and often ſwims thro' ſtormy waves to an obſcure and unknown ſepulchre, without any other obſequies than the tears and groans of a ruined family. The cries of the fatherleſs and of the widow ſeem, at times, to obtain no anſwer; the oppreſſed go down, complaining, to the chambers of death, and Providence ſeems almoſt as ſilent as the grave.

Such, frequently, is the courſe of things in this world; and yet nothing is more certain than that it is ſuperintended and governed

[a] Pſ. lxxiii. 5. [b] Job xxi. 13.

governed by a Being of the moſt unerring wiſdom and of the moſt ſtrict and impartial juſtice. And may we not hence conclude, that though he may now bear with the wicked for a while, either with a view to their repentance and amendment, or to their more exemplary puniſhment if they continue impenitent; and though he may alſo try the faith and conſtancy of his ſervants, with a view, perhaps, to their greater advancement in glory; yet he *will not always hold his peace*, nor remain an unconcerned ſpectator of their conduct. He will, moſt infallibly he will, one day, render to both according to their works, and adjuſt every thing according to the rules of the ſtricteſt equity. Without this adjuſtment, which all the divine attributes demand, this world would be an inexplicable myſtery, and *man* would ſeem indeed to have been *made in vain.*

Does not this matter become ſtill more evident if we argue from analogy? There is harmony and elegance in the motion of the ſun and ſtars; and all the inferior creatures

tures are regulated with apparent wiſdom and propriety. In the vaſt ſcale of beings every creature holds his proper rank, and his faculties are curiouſly adapted to his ſituation. In every thing there appears a deſign, and a fitneſs for the end which it was meant to anſwer. The Univerſe is one great beauty, made up of the moſt regular variety. Nothing diſcordant or inharmonious is to be ſeen in the great ſyſtem of Nature. Now, can we think that the wiſe Governor of all things would be thus exquiſitely nice in ordering the irrational and material world, and at the ſame time give up his nobler workmanſhip to eternal anarchy and confuſion? Hath he beſtowed upon us ſo many and ſuch valuable talents to occupy with, and will he not, ſome day, come to aſk an account of our ſtewardſhip, and to make a diſtinction between thoſe who improved their talents, and thoſe who improved them not? Moſt certainly he will. His attention to all his other works leaves not the ſmalleſt room for doubt. He who gives the hungry beaſts of the field their

meat

meat in due ſeaſon, and *hears the young lion and the raven when they cry*; He who ſends his ſhowers and his dew to refreſh the parched earth, and who ripens its fruits with the kindly beams of his ſun; He who teacheth the rivers when to overflow, and who hath made the ſwelling ocean know his bounds, will undoubtedly take care that the righteous ſhall at laſt be happy, and that the wicked ſhall receive the due recompence of their impiety.

The many viſible interpoſitions of GOD's providence for ſupporting virtue and confounding vice, even in the preſent world, though only a ſtate of probation, plainly indicate that he will one day render unto every one according to his works, and make the adminiſtration of his government, like all his other works, appear perfect. The earneſt is already given, and the preparation is going onward. We ſee the rough ſketches and great outlines of the picture, and we know the power and ſkill of the great Artiſt to accompliſh his work and finiſh his deſign. —Yes, GREAT RULER of the world! we

ſee

ſee the tendency of thy government, and can eaſily judge of the end from the beginning. Thou haſt already given us the firſt-fruits, and we wait in the aſſured hope of the harveſt.

But it is not from reaſon only that we are left to gather the evidences of a future judgment. Revelation alſo has given us the moſt clear and poſitive aſſurances of this event. It declares throughout, that there is to be a *judgment-day* [a]: That CHRIST JESUS is to be the *judge of the quick and of the dead* [b]: That he ſhall be *revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire* [c]: That *he ſhall come with ten thouſand of his ſaints* [d]; in all his own [e], and his Father's glory [f]: That he ſhall *judge the ſecrets of men according to the goſpel* [g]: That the dead ſhall all be raiſed by a general ſummons [h]; and ſhall all be judged *according to their works* [i]; in conſequence of which, *the*

[a] Mat. x. 15. Jude 6. [b] Acts x. 42. & xvii. 31.
[c] 2 Theſ. i. 7. [d] Jude 14. [e] Mat. xxv. 31.
[f] Mark viii. 38. [g] Rom. ii. 16. [h] 1 Cor. xv. 52. & John v. 28, 29. [i] Rev. xx. 13.

the wicked ſhall go into everlaſting puniſh-ment, and the righteous into life eternal [a].

Nor does Revelation barely tell us that this ſhall be the caſe, but fully demonſtrates it in the reſurrection of CHRIST. This fact, atteſted beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, is one of the chief pillars by which our belief of a future judgment is ſupported. For this purpoſe, it pleaſed GOD to order that every circumſtance attending that important event ſhould ſhine with the cleareſt light of evidence. The event itſelf was repeatedly predicted to the diſciples [b], and to the Jews [c] in general, with ſuch clearneſs and preciſion, that it impreſſed the minds and challenged the attention even of the chief rulers; inſomuch that, when CHRIST, expiring on the croſs, ſeemed to die like other men, they requeſted of Pilate a guard to watch the event of the propheſy. A guard was granted. The tomb was ſecured with a great ſtone. The ſtone was ſealed. The whole ſepulchre

[a] Mat. xxv. 46. [b] John xiii. 19. [c] John ii. 18. with Mat. xxvii. 63.

ſepulchre was inveſted with ſoldiers.—A needleſs proviſion this, againſt a few poor fiſhermen, whoſe hopes were buried with their Maſter in the tomb. Needleſs with reſpect to them, but wiſely ordered for the confirmation of our faith and hope. For, by the reſurrection of CHRIST, by which he was *declared to be the Son of* GOD *with power* [a], his miſſion is confirmed; our reſurrection is proved [b]; and the accompliſhment of all his prophecies is certain. Particularly the great promiſe of his ſecond coming, in order to judge the world, ſtands on a rock which cannot be ſhaken. Accordingly, GOD is ſaid to have given all men a full *aſſurance* of a judgment-day, *in that he hath raiſed him from the dead* [c].

It would be unneceſſary to accumulate any more arguments on this ſubject, or to dwell any longer on the proofs of a future judgment, of which we have all the evidence that it is poſſible either for reaſon or revelation to give us.—Our LORD himſelf hath often aſſured us of ſuch a period, and

[a] Rom. i. 4. [b] 1. Cor. xv. 12. [c] Acts xvii. 31.

and, in the moſt ſolemn and pathetic manner, warned us to prepare for it. All the Prophets, from Enoch the firſt to John the laſt of them, ſpake of this day. All the Apoſtles preached of it; and pointed to it as the great object of mens fears or hopes. Every page of Scripture, and every tranſaction of Providence, refer us to it. The univerſal conſent of nations and of ages, and the preſages and forebodings, the hopes and fears, of our own breaſts, concur in the ſame teſtimony. Angels came from heaven on purpoſe to aſſure us of this day. Devils too, with trembling, have acknowledged their belief of it. And if there is any one who will not believe this great truth on all this evidence, *neither would he be perſuaded though one ſhould ariſe from the dead*[a]. Such a reſolved infidel we muſt give up, although with reluctance, till we ſhall ſee the dead riſe all at once to convince him: Or, if this be thought too long, it is but waiting a few days or years, and thy entrance into eternity, *O thou of little faith!*

[a] Luke xvi. 31.

will, with the moſt dreadful conviction, force upon thee the belief of this truth, and make thee wiſh in vain that thou hadſt believed it ſooner.

As it is not my purpoſe to ſpend more time in enlarging upon the proofs of a future judgment, much leſs is it my deſign to enter into any nice or curious diſquiſition concerning it. In matters of ſuch moment as we have before us, there is no leiſure for the inveſtigation of cold and unimportant trifles. This would be as unpardonable as to forſake the richeſt mine of gold, for a wandering vein of the baſeſt metal. What I chiefly intend, is, to lay before you, my fellow Chriſtians, and fellow candidates for eternity, ſome of thoſe circumſtances which ſhall *precede*, *attend*, and *follow*, that unſpeakably great and awful day, on which your fate and mine is to be for ever and ever determined; hoping, that even the moſt imperfect repreſentation of theſe matters may lead us to make a proper improvement of them, and powerfully rouſe us to prepare for meeting them.

them.—But oh! for the tongue of an angel, to do juſtice to this more than angel's theme! I attempt to ſpeak of it with that mixture of humble hope and holy fear, which the proſpect of this day ſo naturally inſpires into the hearts of all, even the beſt, who have not yet finiſhed their probation for it, although they may have made their *calling and election* in a great meaſure *ſure*. And with the moſt ſolemn earneſtneſs, as in the preſence of GOD, and of Him who is on that day to be our common judge, I charge it upon your ſouls, and upon my own, to bear on our ſpirits as we go along, how nearly we are concerned in all the ſcenes that paſs before us. A judgment, which will eternally ſeal the fate of myriads of angels and of men; a day that will wind up the great ſcheme of Providence, and give a clear revelation both of the juſtice and of the mercy of GOD; a day that will put a period to all the affairs of earth and time, ſhut up the career of time itſelf, and be a kind of æra in eternity;—theſe are ſuch grand and awful things, that they

might well challenge a large ſhare of our thoughts, although we were to have no farther concern in them than only to behold them as indifferent ſpectators. How much more ought we to attend to them, when we ourſelves are ſo deeply intereſted, that, on the iſſues of theſe things, our fate through all eternity is depending!—With our ſouls thus impreſſed, then, we proceed,

§ 3. To view ſome of thoſe ſigns in the moral and in the natural world, which the Scriptures tell us ſhall *precede* this day, and ſerve to ſwell its terrors.

In the laſt days, *iniquity ſhall abound: The love of many ſhall wax cold; there ſhall be ſcoffers at religion*, and deſpiſers of every thing ſacred. The race of mankind ſhall grow, in general, ſo abandoned and wicked, that the world, as in the days of Noah, ſhall be ripe for univerſal deſtruction. *There ſhall be wars and rumours of wars; nation ſhall riſe againſt nation;* the ſword, peſtilence, and famine, ſhall be let looſe to check the career of vice, before a long-ſuffering

God ſhall proceed to the laſt extremity[a]. But when theſe ordinary ſcourges of Providence ſhall prove inſufficient to reclaim a world which is become altogether incorrigible; then, burning, as the laſt reſource, muſt be uſed. The world, too deeply infected to be purified by any thing but the laſt fire, muſt be conſumed. In all the former *vials* of wrath which had been poured upon the earth, there was ſome mixture of lenity. Mercy always mingled itſelf with judgment, and in the end prevailed. But this laſt *vial* ſhall entirely conſiſt of unmingled fury[b]; being meant not to correct, but to deſtroy the world.

When this *great and terrible day of the Lord* is nigh, we are told, that there ſhall be ſigns in the heavens to denote its nearneſs, and that all Nature ſhall give ſymptoms of her approaching diſſolution. The ſun, that hitherto came forth like a bridegroom from his chambers, rejoicing to run his courſe, and to publiſh from Eaſt to Weſt his Maker's praiſe, now grows weary of

[a] Mat. xxiv. & Rev. vi. [b] Rev. xvi. 17—19.

ſhining upon creatures that diſobey and diſhonour his Creator. He draws a veil, black as ſackloth, over his mournful countenance, unable any longer to behold the impiety of mankind. The moon likewiſe, bluſhing for the ſame cauſe, ſhall aſſume the colour of blood; and all the leſſer lamps of light ſhall grow dim, and the face of heaven be overſpread with a mournful darkneſs. And as *the moon ſhall be confounded, and the ſun aſhamed;* ſo alſo *the ſtars*, not bearing any longer to adorn the canopy of guilty men, *ſhall fall from their places*, and, like the *untimely fruit of a fig-tree when ſhaken by a mighty wind*, lie ſcattered around[b].

But mark a greater wonder, and a ſtranger ſign, than any of theſe! A profligate and unbelieving race, like their brethren before the flood, go on to fill the meaſure of their iniquity, without paying the leaſt regard to warnings[b]. They buy, they ſell, they marry, and give in marriage, planning for a long and happy life, and,

[a] Joel ii. 31. Mat. xviv. 29. Iſa. xxiv. 23. Rev. vi. 13.
[b] Mat. xxiv. 37.

and ſtill ſinning on, till the awful harbinger of the Son of man appears in the heavens.—How ſolemn that Archangel's declaration! how ſtriking his appearance! *He is clothed with a cloud: a rain-bow is upon his head: his face is as it were the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. He ſets his right foot upon the ſea, and his left foot upon the earth;* and while *ſeven thunders*, or all the thunders of heaven, *utter their voices*, as it were the knell of departing Nature, *he lifts up his hand to heaven, and*, after a ſolemn pauſe, *ſwears by Him who liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and earth, and ſea, and all that they contain, that* TIME *ſhall be no longer*[a]*!*—Awful moment! Time ends: Eternity, "eternity, the date of gods," begins! The Sun, arreſted in his courſe by the Angel's voice, ſtands ſtill, as once above Gibeon; and grows dark, as erſt above Calvary. Aſtoniſhed Nature is inſtantly ſeized with the pangs of death; and, convulſing to her very centre, feels thoſe agonies which ſhall bring her to immediate diſſolution.

[a] Rev. x.

But who can conceive, who can deſcribe the terrors of the ſcene? Sinai, with all its earthquakes, and thunders and lightnings, and *blackneſs of darkneſs and tempeſts*, can ſcarce give us even a faint idea of it. Rivers of ſulphur run in thoſe channels which the waters have deſerted. The *ſtreams are turned into pitch, and the duſt into brimſtone*[a]. Irreſiſtible torrents of fire burſt from every hill. Flaming cataracts guſh from every rock. A thouſand burning mountains, to which all the terrors of Ætna were but a painted ſhadow, pour forth in rapid floods, and deſolate the world.—*Every iſland is fled away; and the mountains are not found*[b].—Yonder the raging ſea boils, as in an oven. The ocean conſiſts now of liquid fire. That reſtraint which once ſaid to it, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come and no further*, is now taken away, and its proud waves are no longer ſtaid by banks of ſand or ſhelving ſhores. In ſwoln billows they riſe, and threaten not only the earth, but even the ſkies with deſtruction.

[a] Iſ. xxxiv. 9. [b] Rev. xvi. 20.

ſtruction.—Hark! how loud the roaring of theſe waves! But it is drowned by the louder ſhrieks of the people. See! the *perplexity of* individuals! See! the *diſtreſs of* whole nations! *Their hearts* utterly *fail them for fear*[a]. Now they wiſh they had never been born; and anon, with greater fervency, that they could but die. This way and that, in myriads, they attempt to fly. They cry, in vain, for a place of refuge. Both earth and hell deny it.

Nor are theſe terrors confined to the land and the ſea only. Nature every where elſe, is ſtruggling with her final doom, and ready to expire under the ſame tremendous convulſions. The air, kindled by the avenging breath of the Almighty, plays off all its various engines of comets, meteors, lightnings, and thunders. Balls of fire run through it; and falling orbs, in wild confuſion, ruſh againſt each other. There, forked lightnings burſt from clouds; and here, the heavens rend with thunders. All *the elements*, in a general uproar, break looſe

[a] Luke xxi. 25, 26.

looſe one upon another, and *melt with fervent heat*[a]; while *the powers of heaven are ſhaken*, and its expanded curtain, like a ſcroll of parchment ſhrivelled by the flames, is rolled in folds together, and thrown aſide as an old uſeleſs garment[b]. The props, which hitherto ſupported the univerſe, totter on their baſis. Every inſtant they threaten to fall down, and to hurl the once grand and beautiful fabric of the world, to the ſame dark chaos in which it was at firſt buried, ere the SPIRIT had yet *moved upon the face of the waters*, or "Confuſion heard the voice of God."

But we only leſſen theſe terrors by attempting to deſcribe them. Human language and human conception are altogether unequal to the labour. To what, then, ſhall we liken them, or *with what compariſon ſhall we compare them?* Our thoughts fly from one end of creation to the other in ſearch of ſome apt images to repreſent them, and return home diſappointed and wearied, without finding any

[a] 2 Pet. iii. 10. [b] Iſ. xxxiv. 4. with Heb. i. 12.

any thing in all the range of the univerſe that may be compared with them. If it be ſo terrible to ſee only one great and populous city involved in one conſuming blaze, what muſt it be to ſee a whole world burning, and millions ſhrieking in its flames? flames in which there is no periſhing, and from the terrors of which there is, for them, no eſcaping! If the deſtruction of Sodom and Jeruſalem, and other dreadful ſcenes of that nature, fill us with terror when we only read of them, what ſhall it be to behold the world in one general conflagration?—*the heavens on fire; the earth, and all the works that are therein, burning*[a]! If only the diſtant thoughts of this ſight make us already tremble, how ſhall we endure to ſee the reality? Where ſhall we ſtand, when all the warring elements are let looſe; when earthquakes ſhake the globe within, and flames cover it without; when thunders rend, with their inceſſant peals, the ſkies; and lightnings, fold on fold, flaſh down from all the

[a] 2 Pet. iii. 10.

the lowring clouds? What den can hide us from the bolts of an Almighty Hand? What rock can ſhield us from the arrows of JEHOVAH's quiver? How ſhall our mountain ſtand, when the everlaſting hills ſhall melt; or what ark ſhall ſave us from a deluge of liquid fire? Can we, unconcerned, behold ten thouſand ſtreams of burning ſulphur ſweep every thing before them? Can we, unmoved, hear their terrific roarings contending with the ocean's ſhrinking waters? If we could, yet theſe are but the beginnings of ſorrows, and can no more compare with that ſcene which is to ſucceed, than any other thing can do with this. No; that " wrack of matter and that craſh of worlds," which, after a few more of Nature's expiring groans, will follow, are among thoſe *things unſpeakable*, of which it were in vain to attempt the deſcribing, until we ſhall behold them.——

In that awful day, O SAVIOUR! thou haſt bidden thy people to lift up their heads, amidſt all the terrors of a diſſolving world, and to rejoice, becauſe their redemption draweth

draweth nigh. Grant, O grant, that ſuch joy in that day may be ours, and it ſufficeth. Then, come fire, come tempeſt, come death, come judgment; none of theſe things can diſmay us, if thou doſt but ſmile upon us, O REDEEMER!

§ 4. IMAGINE, then, the world reduced to this ſtate, and ſuch of its inhabitants as are ſtill living, convulſed with terror and amazement, "'twixt upper, nether, and ſurrounding flames," when the clangor of the laſt trumpet is heard, ſummoning all the nations of the dead to *ariſe and come to judgment!* How loud, how univerſal, was that alarm! Compared with it, all the thunders of heaven uniting in their laſt peal, were but a whiſper, feeble as the voice of the graſhopper. All the living, though far diſjoined as pole from pole, have heard it; and, in the twinkling of an eye, are changed! All the millions of the dead have alſo heard it, and obey. All nature has heard it; and the ſea and the grave deliver up their charge. Every element reſtores every particle of the dead which

it had in its poſſeſſion. The chambers of death open every where their graves to enlarge their priſoners. Every bone, as in theProphet's viſion[a], flies to meet its bone; and every atom, gathered by the angels, finds its fellow. The frame, in all its members, is complete: not an atom of a limb is wanting.—At the ſame inſtant, the conſcious ſoul repairs to her now immortal mate, from that place where, wiſhing or fearing this re-union, ſhe ſpent her widowed period: whether hovering o'er earth, or coaſting along her final ſtate and her eternal manſion; or whether, as is moſt likely, ſhe has been diſtant as the throne of GOD, or remote as hell's centre.

——Where now are you who thought it *an incredible thing that* GOD *ſhould raiſe the dead*[b]? See! the long promiſed day, and

[a] Ezek. xxxvii.

[a] To ſuch as object to the reſurrection, we may reply in the words of our SAVIOUR to the Phariſees, *Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures nor the power of* GOD, Mat. xxii. 29. In the ſcriptures, our LORD frequently promiſed this event, John v. 28, 29. &c. and

and long expected also, though not by you, at length is come! See whole nations rising at once from the silent tomb, to attend the great assize, which men and angels must attend;

and proved, in raising himself, that he was able to perform what he promised. Nor was the resurrection of CHRIST only a demonstration of his power, Rom. i. 4. and a proof of his mission, John xiii. 19. and ii. 18. with Mat. xxvii. 63. but also a pledge and earnest of the general resurrection. Hence he is called the *First-fruits* of the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 20. and, by a strong figure, *the resurrection* itself, John xi. 25. Accordingly St Paul argues, that since CHRIST is risen, the resurrection must follow as a necessary consequence; 1 Cor. xv. 12, &c.

We should remember, that all things *possible*, are equally easy to OMNIPOTENCE. And why may it not be as easy to raise a body, as it was at first to create the matter of that body, then form it, and infuse a soul into it? Why may not He who made this curious machine, repair it, and restore every atom to its place, seeing he counteth all the stars, and numbereth the sands upon the shore?—If it be objected, that the same particles at different times make part of different bodies; to this it has been replied, (see SCOT's *Christian Life*), that supposing a Cannibal to devour the whole body of another man, not one hundredth part of it would enter into the substance of his. So that a man weighing 200 lb. would lose but 2 lb. by this transf-

attend; and to receive from the Supreme Tribunal their final ſentence! For, *the day* is come: The day of vengeance and of recompence is come; the day of terrors and of triumphs; and all your poor dark hopes of being annihilated, are vaniſhed before its brightneſs. Put on, therefore, your bodies; gather up your ſcattered parts; collect your thoughts, prepare your accounts;

tranſmutation, which is leſs than a man loſes frequently in a fit of ſweating or ſickneſs. Add to this, that once in ſeven years the ſubſtance of one's body is entirely changed, ſo that the Cannibal reſtores the little he retained of the unnatural ſpoil.—But theſe diſquiſitions are rather curious than uſeful. The matter of fact ſtands upon a rock which cannot be ſhaken, although we may not be able to account for every circumſtance of it. Enough for all the purpoſes of the reſurrection that we ſhall have a conſciouſneſs of being the ſame, though we may not be ſo in every particular; as I am conſcious of being the ſame perſon now that I was ſeven years ago, though every particle of my body may have ſince been changed.—That the dead ſhall be raiſed, is all that it concerns us at preſent to know. If any man aſk *with what body do they come?* 1 Cor. xv. 35. in what reſpects it may be the ſame with the preſent, and in what reſpects it may be different? we anſwer, that we cannot tell.

counts; for the Judge is nigh, even at the door.—*Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him!*

The resurrection is complete. From Adam to the last of his sons, not one is amissing. *From the four winds* the spirit came: *the breath* at the voice of GOD, *breathed upon the dead; and they live and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army*[a]. —What myriads! and myriads of myriads! surpassing even the computation of an angel. Every clod of the valley swarms with life. The whole earth appears as one general cemetry. It pours forth in every place the thronging crowds, pressing on each other in close procession. Lo! from the same bed, one rises from his long sleep of, perhaps, some thousand years, and another from his short slumber which commenced but the day before. The one felt not his night of many thousand years too long; nor does the other complain that his rest hath been too short, although he laid down his weary limbs only yesterday.

[a] Eze k. xxxvii. 9, 10.

—The Jew and the Samaritan meet here in peace, forgetful of their ancient diſputations[a]. Both awake from thoſe aſhes where their tongues have long been ſilent. The one looks for mount Gerizzim; the other turns his face towards Jeruſalem. But mount Gerizzim is vaniſhed from his place; and the earthly Jeruſalem is no where to be found. They who contended ſo violently about the comparative ſanctity of thoſe places, now lament their folly; as all thoſe muſt do, who were more zealous about the modes and forms of worſhip, than about the vital parts of religion, charity and devotion.—*How have we ſpent our money; for that which was not bread, and our labour for that which ſatisfieth not!—We have laboured in vain, and ſpent our ſtrength for nought!*

The holy Catholic wonders now to ſee a Pagan or a Turk riſe with him from the ſame conſecrated ground, although he would formerly allow no room there to the unhallowed heretic his Chriſtian brother. Why?

[a] John iv. 9, 20.

Why?—becauſe his Chriſtian brother was of another denomination! Notwithſtanding this, he hath ſlept the ſlumber of the tomb beſide him, and is now ready to mount with him, hand in hand, to meet their common LORD. The one bluſhes for his former want of charity; the other forgives and forgets it.

See here! the mighty riſes trembling from his monument, heedleſs of the vain epithets it once beſtowed on him. Death ſtill ſits pale upon his face, and terror almoſt ſhakes back his new-reſtored limbs to their former duſt and atoms. There, the delicate, who *would not adventure to ſet the ſole of her foot on the ground for delicateneſs and tenderneſs*[a], ſtartles at the ſurrounding flames, wiſhes to hide her head among earth and worms, and to avoid that intolerable light that ſhall diſcloſe her life of vanity. Here the hypocrite looks in vain for his former veil; and the vicious prays, to no purpoſe, to the rocks to cover him.

See there, likewiſe, the infant and the

[a] Deut. xxviii. 56.

aged, the oppreſſor and the oppreſſed, riſe from the ſame place of repoſe; and a Cæſar comes forth from the ſame tomb with his ſlave. But the monuments of braſs and marble are no longer true to their truſt: they diſtinguiſh not now the Emperor from his thrall. Do not both appear alike naked ghoſts? or rather, is not their ſtate reverſed, and their conditions as it were exchanged? There ſtands Alexander ſtript of his greatneſs; and there Xerxes, a ſecond time forſaken by his millions. See how they attempt to ſhrink back like cowards; wiſhing to reſign their ancient precedence, and to ſtand unperceived amidſt the throng of multitudes. Not only the moſt obſcure of devout and zealous Chriſtians outſhines now thoſe dethroned monarchs; but even the moſt obſcure of merciful and conſcientious heathens is preferred before them. And how infinitely doth a Socrates, a Zoroaſter, a Confucius, or any other "who taught the only ſcience to be good," eclipſe them, not only now, but even in their greateſt glory and *beſt eſtate*,

eſtate, which had been *altogether vanity*. Thoſe wore a mortal, but theſe, through the mercy of GOD in CHRIST, wear an immortal crown. Thoſe had men for their attendants; but to theſe, lo! thouſands of angels now miniſter.

How vaſt, how unſpeakably vaſt, appears now the difference between riches and wiſdom, between greatneſs and goodneſs! That king, who had once been rich even to a proverb, now feels the truth of what the Philoſopher told him, That no man before his death could be called happy. That other monarch, who had his chariot drawn by the conquered king who moralized on the turning of the wheel, now finds that the great wheel of Providence hath taken another turn, by which his fortunes have changed their poſition [a].—Bleſſed, O GOD, are all thy ſervants now, though formerly

[a] Seſoſtris king of Egypt had his chariot drawn by four captive monarchs. One of them fixing his eye upon the turning of a wheel, was aſked by the victorious king, what he had been thinking of? The turning of this wheel, replied he, puts me in mind of the verſatility of human fortune; for that part which is higheſt now ſhall preſently be the loweſt.

the hut had been their home, the coarſeſt and ſcantieſt fare their food, and the roughеſt garment their ſingle covering!—Yes, for virtue and piety alone confer, on this day, the only title to true greatneſs. All the pageant pomp of riches is now faded, and each poor ſlave ſtands level with his lord. Every diſtinction, except that between virtue and vice, piety and impiety, is left behind in the tomb, and loſt in eternal oblivion. But how vaſt, how inconceivable a difference doth this alone create! Mark what a diſparity it makes between the righteous and the wicked; between the reſurrection of the juſt and of the unjuſt!—Oh! the brightneſs, the gladneſs, the joy of the firſt, ſpringing up to glory, honour, and immortality, and ſinging the Apoſtles ſong of triumph on the brink of the tomb, which held them ſo long its priſoners: *O Death, where is now thy ſting! and where, O grave, is now thy victory! Thanks*, they ſay, *be to God, who giveth us the victory, through* JESUS CHRIST *our* LORD[a].—And thanks, thanks without meaſure,

[a] 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

meaſure, without ceaſing, and without end, be to our GOD, who cauſeth us already to triumph, in thehopes of bearing, on that day, a part in this ſong of victory, and of ſoaring aloft, with that glad and glorious hoſt, to meet our long-expected and long-wiſhed for LORD! Alleluiah! let his ſaints already break forth into the joyful ſong; *for he cometh, he cometh to judge the earth* [a]!

Such ſhall be the reſurrection of the juſt, when they riſe in thoſe bodies which formerly were the members of CHRIST, and the temples of the HOLY GHOST. Therefore they are now glorified; reſcued from all the diſhonours of the grave, and ready to paſs, in reunion with their ſouls, to the joy of their LORD, and to their long-expected felicity. Happy iſſue of all their ſufferings and ſelf-denial! Happy change, when the mournful ſong of *How long!* is converted into the glad exclamation of *Behold he cometh* [b]! What ſoul, if not infatuated, does not almoſt

[a] Pſ. xcvi. 13. [b] Rev. vi. 10. & i. 7.

burſt through the fetters of his earthly tabernacle with ardent deſire to have a ſhare in this reſurrection, and to ſtand in his lot among the righteous in the latter day? Who can behold that life in their eyes, that joy in their looks, and that tranſport in their countenances, and not cry out, "O let me die the death of the righteous, that my latter end may be like unto theirs!"—Who can think of their felicity, without uſing the moſt earneſt and immediate efforts to prepare for it, while the ſhort and precarious opportunity of life ſhall continue to favour him? And who can be prepared for this felicity, and not earneſtly cry, *Amen, even ſo come* LORD JESUS!

But ah! ſee next the terror and conſternation of the wicked; riſing, or rather dragged forth reluctantly from their priſon, to ſhame and everlaſting condemnation. With what horror do they hear the ſummons to meet the Judge, in thoſe polluted bodies, *whoſe members they made ſervants to uncleanneſs and to iniquity!* They appear with eyes full of adultery; with hands

hands ſtained with blood, and bribes, and rapine; with a blaſpheming, a lying, a reviling, a perjured tongue. "To unite a ſoul again to ſuch a body, is worſe than tying a man to his murdered friend, which will both ſcare his conſcience, and poiſon him with a noiſome ſtench."—What reflections upon each other are there! what ſelf-accuſations! The ſon accuſes the father; the daughter the mother; and a man's worſt enemies are they of his own houſehold [a].—Hear the ſad communings of the unmerciful, when now their cruelty and uncharitableneſs to their diſtreſſed brethren ſtare them in the face, and riſe in their remembrance: *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul when he beſought us and we would not hear: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us* [b].—Hear their ſelf-accuſations, when all their other follies and crimes are ſet in array againſt them.—"O fool that I was, to prefer things temporal to things eternal! to prefer hell to heaven!—

[a] Mat. x. 35, 36. [b] Gen. xlii. 21.

ven!—Confuſion cover me; death hide me; or hell itſelf caſt over me its covering! *For the great day of* GOD's *wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand* [a]?"

Thus, each of the diſtracted multitude condemns himſelf; whilſt all, trembling and aſtoniſhed, know not what to do, or whom to conſult. The ſon runs to his amazed father, who needs the advice which his dear child aſks; and the wife claſps about her aſtoniſhed huſband, who is as helpleſs as his affrighted conſort. The Publican begs counſel of the Phariſee; and he, poor ſoul, is as much at a loſs as the reprobate [b]. Here kings have loſt their majeſty; and there the mighty men are forſaken of their courage. They all cry to the mountains to cover them, and look round for ſome den or cave of the earth to hide them [c]. But alas! they can find no ſuch covert from that ſtorm which thickens around them, fraught with eternal deſtruction. Or if they ſhould, they ſoon perceive the vanity of thoſe retreats, and find

[a] Rev. vi. 17. [b] Glanvil's Serm. [c] Rev. vi. 16.

find themſelves as much expoſed in the cloſeſt vaults, as they could be in the beams of mid-day. For hills, caves, and all, are HIS whom they wiſh to avoid; and they will not, cannot conceal his enemies from his eye, which pierces through the earth as the ſun through a globe of cryſtal. What ſhall they do, then; or whither ſhall they go? They cannot bear his preſence, and they cannot avoid it. The light kills, and the darkneſs will not cover; for *the darkneſs and the light are both alike to him*.—Hark! how earneſtly they pray, although they pray in vain, that the rocks may fall upon them, and the grave for ever conceal them. On every hand they eagerly ſeek death, but cannot find it: A thouſand and a thouſand times they paſſionately deſire it; but it flies from them. Turn what way they will, nothing meets them, before or behind, without or within, but (dreadful alternative!) a GOD in terrors, or a world on fire!

§ 5. WHILST theſe things fall out almoſt

at

at once, (tho' in our ideas and relation they muſt paſs in ſucceſſion), and whilſt every human being is, according to his character, affected either with joy or terror, to which no language, no conception, can be true; *the ſign of the Son of Man begins to appear in the heavens.* An uncommon light diſcovers itſelf at a diſtance, where heaven wide expands her portals, and fills all the extent of ſpace with a more dazzling glory than if the firmament were entirely covered with one ſun. Upon a nearer approach, the *great white throne*, upborne by myriads of Cherubs, is diſcerned, in the midſt of the floods of light. It is diſcerned with HIM who ſitteth upon it, from whoſe preſence the heavens and the earth are ready to flee away [a].—*Behold! He comes, He comes; and who may abide the day of his coming, or ſtand at his appearing!* If the moſt eminent ſaints of old were ſo ſtruck with the appearance of only a ſingle angel, as to fall down almoſt dead when ſuch viſions were vouchſafed to them, how infinitely

[a] Rev. xx. 11.

nitely more overwhelming muſt be the united glories of all the angels, with the King of angels at their head! Eſpecially as He, whoſe *eyes are as a flame of fire, and whoſe countenance is like the ſun ſhining in his ſtrength* [b], ſhall on this occaſion appear with a peculiar ſplendour; and as all his train, ranged in their hierarchal order, ſhall be clothed as it were in their robes of ſtate, and ſhall diſplay in a ſingular manner all the luſtre and excellencies of their nature.—O the ineffable majeſty of the SON OF GOD! *clothed with light as with a garment*; coming in the glory of the Father, and attended by all his holy angels!—Is this He who came once with *dyed garments* from Bozrah, with *his apparel red, like him that treadeth the wine-fat?* Is this the WORD OF GOD that was once *clothed with a veſture dipt in blood* [c]? It is; it is the ſame crucified JESUS returned in glory, to take vengeance on his enemies, and to ſlay thoſe who would not have him to rule over them. It is the King

[b] Rev. i. 13, 14. [c] Iſ. lxiii. 1, 2. & Rev. xix. 13.

King of kings, at the head of all his hoſts of angels. Oh how unlike is now the *Son of Man* to the helpleſs babe of Bethlehem, or to that man of grief who groaned on Golgotha, and poured forth his ſoul upon the croſs of Calvary! Lambent glories ſhine now in pointed radiance, around thoſe temples which were once crowned with thorns. Light ineffable flows from that *viſage* which was once *marred* with ſweat and blood [a]. The ſide that was pierced, and the hands and feet that were transfixed, ſtill retain, conſpicuous, the tract of the ſteel; and emit from the more than glorious ſcars, ſuch irradiations of bliſs as bring ſalvation to all thoſe who can behold them with joy. The reed is now, indeed, become a ſceptre; and the ſplendid robe, behold it ye ſcoffers! is converted, from being an enſign of mock-royalty, to denote the majeſty of the Godhead. It ſtreams in folds of more effulgent light, as it were the ſtandard to mark the place to which the bleſſed, in thronging crowds, are

[a] Iſ. lii, 14.

are to repair. Myriads, lifting up their new-awakened eyes, behold the ſignal, and rejoice. Hark! how they already ſhout, "To David's Son, and David's King, HOSANNAH!—*Salvation to our* GOD, *who ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb! For now is come ſalvation and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our* GOD, *and the power of his* CHRIST[a]!"

Lo! on either ſide of the Judge, appears an angel of illuſtrious order, adorned with enſigns declarative of the great purpoſe of his coming. He on the right, who *preached the everlaſting goſpel, the glad-tidings of great joy to all mankind*, and who on the fields of Bethlehem proclaimed *Peace on earth, and good-will towards men*, holds forth, like Noah's dove, a green olive-branch, the ſure ſign of peace and love to all thoſe who loved JESUS. On the other ſide, he who, ſince the apoſtaſy of our firſt parents, *guarded the way of the tree of life* and the gates of paradiſe, waves in his hand the flaming ſword of GOD's juſtice and due

[a] Rev. xii. 10.

due vengeance, ready to drive all ſinners away from the heavenly, as erſt he did from the earthly Eden[a]. The thouſand thouſand more who miniſter unto the Judge, and the ten thouſand times ten thouſand of the hoſt of heaven who ſtand before him, ſeem to be ſo many blazing ſuns in the retinue of the SON OF GOD. All theſe, while the LORD himſelf is deſcending from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Arch-angel and the trump of GOD, ſing *with harp, with harp and the voice of pſalms*, and with all the other muſic of heaven, that ſong which the SPIRIT of heaven once inſpired[b]. They ſing it, hymning with exultations of joy, that the day of the righteous judgment of GOD is come; that day for which their companions, the ſouls under the altar, ſo often cried, *How long*[b]*!*— That day for which the creation of GOD groaned, as for the period in which Vice was to be thruſt down from her uſurped eminence, and Virtue exalted to the throne of her great Exemplar and Patron. Hark! how

[a] Gen. iii. 24. [b] Pſ. lxviii. [c] Rev. vi. 10.

how they ſhout, "Let GOD ariſe, and let his enemies be ſcattered! Let them alſo that hate him flee before him. As ſmoke is driven, ſo drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, ſo let the wicked periſh at the preſence of GOD.—But let the righteous be glad! Let them rejoice before GOD, yea, let them rejoice exceedingly!"

§ 6. THIS ſong of the deſcending proceſſion of the heavenly hoſt, is heard by all on earth. Nor is it only heard, but its force is felt by every human being. See! how it has increaſed the joy of the righteous, but added to the terror and diſmay of the wicked. Both, indeed, echo a reply; but ah! how different! The righteous, lifting up their heads with joy that their redemption is nigh, (and grant, O SAVIOUR, ſuch joy in that day may be ours!) cry out, *Hoſannah! bleſſed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord! amen, even ſo come, Lord Jeſus!*—Whilſt the wicked, with increaſing importunity, cry to the rocks and mountains, *Fall upon us, and hide*

us from the face of Him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb[a]!—But alas! their prayers are as vain as they are late. The rocks and the mountains are deaf; and neither hell nor earth can afford a retreat to hide them.

If charity did not check the queſtion as unſeaſonable, and ſomewhat like an inſult to the miſerable, one might now aſk ſome of thoſe wretches, whoſe dominion extended once from ſea to ſea, What is now become of your poſſeſſions? You called them yours, and perhaps your ſouls were the price with which you bought them; but now you ſee the vanity of your title, when all that you once poſſeſſed cannot afford you ſo much as a den to conceal, or a rock to cover you! Your palaces, which hid their heads in the clouds; your bowers, which rivalled paradiſe, and all the pleaſurable ſcenes which once delighted you; tell, if you can, where are they? Where is that ſpot of the earth that bore them, or the blue ſky that covered them?—"Where are

[a] Rev. vi 16.

are the great empires of the world, with all their imperial cities? their pillars, trophies, and monuments of glory? Show me where they ſtood; read the inſcription; tell me the victor's name. What remains, what impreſſions, what difference or diſtinction, do you ſee in this maſs of fire? Rome itſelf, eternal Rome, the great city, the empreſs of the world, whoſe domination and ſuperſtition, ancient or modern, made a great part of the hiſtory of the earth; what is become of her now? She laid her foundations deep, and her palaces were ſtrong and ſumptuous; ſhe glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, and ſaid in her heart, *I ſit a queen, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow.* But her hour is come; ſhe is wiped away from the face of the earth, and buried in perpetual oblivion. Nor is it cities only, and the work of mens hands, but the everlaſting hills, the mountains and rocks of the earth, are melted as wax before the ſun; and their place is nowhere found.—Here ſtood the Alps, the load of the earth; now ſoftened and diſſolved as

a tender cloud into rain. Here ſtood the African mountains, and Atlas with his top above the clouds. There was frozen Caucaſus, and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Aſia. And yonder, towards the north, ſtood the Riphæan hills, clothed in ice and ſnow.—All theſe are now vaniſhed; diſſolved as the ſnow upon their heads, and ſwallowed up in a red ſea of fire. Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY! Juſt and true are thy ways, thou KING of Saints. Alleluiah*!"

Falſe world! and lying vanities of life! what now is your amount, and what is become of you? *In one hour all your riches are come to nought; in one hour you are made deſolate!*—Why did not you, who allowed your ſouls to be deceived by thoſe ſhadows, look forward to this day, and conſider what the end of theſe things would be? Behold, now, they are all melted down into one undiſtinguiſhed maſs, of which he who promiſed you the whole, or any

* Burnet's Theory.

any part, for falling down and worſhipping him, cannot give you an hair-breadth in lieu of all his fair but falſe promiſes. Nay, the arch-fiend hath not now, in all his hell, any corner in which he may hide himſelf from the impending judgment. He and all his crew, without daring any more to mutter that *the time* of their full torment is *not come*, emerge from their ſmoking pit with reluctance, and come forth to receive their laſt doom; dragging after them thoſe chains of darkneſs, in which they have been reſerved to the judgment of this great day [a].

By theſe legions of infernals, all thoſe of the human race who had been once ſeduced by them, and who, by wilful ſinning, choſe to ſide with them, are dragged to the preſence of the SON OF GOD's tribunal; leaving behind them their beloved world, involved in flames, or burnt to aſhes. Their horrible ſhrieks tell, that they carry with them a great part of their hell in their own boſom; as do likewiſe

[a] 2 Pet. ii. 4.

thoſe ſigns of everlaſting terror and deſpair, which, like *the mark of the beaſt*, are ſo deeply impreſſed *upon their foreheads*.

Not ſo the righteous. Up-borne on angels wings, they ſoar aloft, with inconceivable joy, to meet their LORD. Mark, how glad, how glorious are their hoſts! They are *bright as the ſun*, *fair as the moon*, *and ſtrong as an army* of angels *under* Jehovah's *banners* [a]. In proportion as they approach the throne, their joys increaſe, and their fears vaniſh. And why ſhould they not? For the Judge wears to them the mild aſpect of a *Lamb*; whilſt he appears to the wicked as a *Lion* [b], arrayed in the moſt dreadful terrors.—To the righteous he is the morning *Sun*, *riſing with healing under his wings* [c], and ſhedding around them ineffable joy and gladneſs. His mild beams are, therefore, to them a thouſand times more welcome, than is the eaſtern light to him who hath been wandering through wild and dangerous paths, in a dark and ſtormy night, and in a land unknown.—

But

[a] Song vi. 10. [b] Rev. v. 5, 6. [c] Mal. iv. 2.

But the ſame beams are an intolerable and *conſuming fire* to thoſe who always *hated the light*, the workers of iniquity. The firſt, therefore, like eagles, mount with growing ſtrength and joy to meet the SUN: Whereas the latter, like birds of night, deſire to hide themſelves, and to ſhun it. But the deſire is vain; the attempt is impoſſible. For lo every one, ſmall and great, of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, all gathered together before the JUDGE! *For, every eye muſt ſee him, and they alſo who pierced him*[a]! Every hand muſt be lifted before him; even his who ſmote him in the hall; his, who drove the nails through his hands and feet upon the hill; and thine, which was waſhed in vain, O Pilate!—Lo! every creature, of heaven, earth, or hell, now bows the knee, ſome of them for the firſt time, to JESUS. All of them make either a willing, or a forced obeiſance to the Judge. They all ſtand before the tribunal, in ſuſpenſe. Silence is proclaimed. Silence reigns. The

[a] Rev. i. 7.

books are opened by HIM who *alone is worthy to loose their seals.* The last judgment, with all its inconceivable solemnity, begins.

CHAP. II.

Of the Procedure of the Judgment.

§ 1. Every person's character minutely investigated. § 2. The good and the bad separated; and the first rewarded according to their respective improvements. § 3. A view of the blessed—Patriarchs. § 4.—Prophets. § 5.—Apostles. § 6.—Martyrs, and other holy sufferers.

§ 1. THUS have we heard, my fellow-candidates for eternity, a faint account of those awful realities which you and I shall one day see introducing the judgment-day. But how shall short-sighted spirits, that are immured in dark cottages of clay, proceed to consider the circumstances that shall attend that scene; the solemnity, perhaps, as well as the season

of

of which, may lie as yet far beyond the conception and ken of the moſt exalted angel in heaven?—O thou Infinite and Eternal SPIRIT! before whom all things paſt, preſent, and future, lie open and unveiled, vouchſafe to our benighted ſouls a ray of that light, which thou didſt beam on the favourite diſciple in his viſions, that we may be able, in our meaſure, to comprehend what thou didſt reveal to him, and to thy other ſervants the prophets, concerning this great day.

In dependence on this Divine aid, let us proceed to figure to ourſelves what we can of the awful terrors of that important moment, when you and I are called, one by one, before the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST; to have our lives reviewed; all our thoughts, words, and actions, canvaſſed; and the principles from which our conduct proceeded, inveſtigated, before an aſſembled univerſe! Who can conceive, although we may already have, in ſome degree, the ſentence of life or death within ourſelves; who can conceive the painful ſuſpenſe in

which

which we ſhall ſtand for that important deciſion, that ſhall conſign us over to the right or to the left; to be attendants on the throne of GOD and companions of angels,—or aſſociates of blaſpheming ſpirits, in chains of fire and darkneſs, through eternity! O the terror of the very thought, to every one who hath not a ſure intereſt in thy favour, O JESUS!

Methinks, and O let each think ſo for himſelf! methinks I hear my name called; the book of GOD's remembrance opened, where all the tranſactions of my life, with all their motives, are recorded; my page in it read in the hearing of heaven, earth, and hell; while I myſelf ſtand in a conſpicuous point of view, with a beam of light from the eye of the Judge ſhining through my heart, and pointing out, to the whole aſſembly, all that ever paſſed within its dark and cloſe-curtained chambers, inviſible, till now, to every eye but GOD's. With aſtoniſhment, I now find that my moſt ſecret words and actions are as if they had been proclaimed on the houſe-tops;

tops; and that even my half-formed embryo-thoughts were ſeen and heard in heaven.—I hear all my opportunities recounted, and all the mercies which had been vouchſafed to me again numbered.—I hear all the multitude of my ſins told in order, if they have not been covered by charity, blotted out by repentance, and, as I truſt they are, waſhed off and cancelled by the atoning blood of the LAMB.—But if this be not the caſe, I muſt ſee them all marſhalled in dreadful array before me, with every aggravating circumſtance which had ſerved to make them heinous. I hear all the warnings, offers, and aids, which I got from the word, from the Spirit, from the providence, or from the meſſengers of GOD, related; with whatever regard I paid to every ſingle warning to flee from wrath, and to every ſingle tender of mercy and pardon.—In a word; I hear what I was, what I might, or what I ſhould have been, fairly ſet forth before me. And I think I hear the voice of the Judge

found-

ſounding in my ears, aſking theſe, or ſome ſuch queſtions.——

" What good haſt thou done; what labours of love haſt thou performed for thy LORD and thy GOD; what benevolence and charity haſt thou ſhown to thy brethren of mankind, and what care for the ſalvation of thy own ſoul? What is the foundation thou haſt built upon, and what is the ſuperſtructure thou haſt raiſed upon it? Can the mornings and evenings teſtify they heard thy prayers? Can the ſabbaths teſtify thou haſt ſanctified thoſe days, and kept them *holy unto the Lord?* Can every man and every angel who knew thee, bear witneſs, that thou didſt, with ſincerity and conſtancy, obey and revere thy GOD, love thy brother, and govern thyſelf? Can thy own conſcience join in the verdict; and cannot even the *accuſing ſpirit* contradict the teſtimony?—How didſt thou act in every ſtation, relation, and office, in which Providence placed thee? Haſt thou been ready to communicate in affluence; content and unrepining in poverty? Haſt thou

thou been merciful as a maſter, or faithful as a ſervant; affectionate as a parent, or dutiful as child; firm as a friend; and placable and forgiving, if at any time unavoidably conſtrained to differ with thy brother? Haſt thou endeavoured to fulfil the law of love in all its extent; and done to all men as thou wouldſt be done to? How didſt thou reſiſt thoſe ſins that did moſt eaſily beſet thee; and thoſe temptations to which thy office or ſituation in life did more peculiarly expoſe thee? Has thy heart been charitable and ſincere; thy converſation honeſt and exemplary? Art thou free of the blood of all men; can none charge any part of their ruin upon thy bad example?—Whom, of all that are here, didſt thou, for my ſake, feed when they were hungry, clothe when they were naked, entertain when they were ſtrangers, and viſit when thy were ſick and in priſon? Who are the poor thou haſt been a friend to, who are the widows to whom thou haſt been a helper, and the orphans to whom thou haſt been a parent? Who

are

are the ignorant thou haſt inſtructed; and the ſouls thou haſt been a mean of ſaving, by taking compaſſion upon them when they were out of the way? To the teſtimony of all theſe, which ſhall be heard, dareſt thou appeal; conſcious it muſt be favourable to thy trial?—In a word, what improvement didſt thou make of thy time and of thy talents?—Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip."

Theſe queſtions being aſked and anſwered; methinks I next ſee myſelf confronted to thoſe whom in any ſhape or degree I injured; or, (O let me bode more happily!) to thoſe who injured me. I hear the teſtimony of thoſe whom I had any dealings with, called for; and of thoſe whom I had it in my power, in any manner or degree, to comfort or relieve. I hear alſo the teſtimony of every angel, who had been the inviſible witneſs of my conduct, aſked concerning me—And all this, not to inform the Judge, who *knoweth* already moſt perfectly *what is in man*; but that the whole world may ſee the equity

of

of his judgment; and that ſuch as have been faithful to the truſt committed to their care, may be honoured and rewarded in the moſt public manner. O Job! who haſt been eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; who deliveredſt the poor that cried to thee, and the fatherleſs that had none to help him; who cauſedſt the widow's heart to ſing for joy, and didſt never eat thy morſel alone while the orphan wanted;—thou didſt caſt thy bread upon the waters, and now thou ſhalt find it; thou didſt lend unto the LORD, and now it ſhall be a thouſand-fold repaid thee. Nay, thou didſt feed and clothe the LORD of Glory himſelf, inaſmuch as thou didſt ſo to any of his poor brethren, of whom ſo vaſt a crowd lift now their hands to bleſs thee.—Happy man! faithful ſteward! greateſt indeed of all the men of the eaſt! who would not chooſe to ſtand with thee in thy lot on this day? O may I, in my humble ſphere, find ſuch acceptance; and may my ſtewardſhip be, like thine, approved of!

§ 2. EVERY

§ 2. EVERY perſon's character being thus minutely ſcrutinized, the good are ſeparated from the bad, with infinitely more eaſe than a *ſhepherd divides his flock of ſheep from the herd of goats*. For, the countenance of the Judge, the miniſtration of angels, and an inward impulſe, ſtrong as fate, compel every one, inſtantly and irreſiſtibly, to aſſociate with thoſe of his own kind. This done, the good are firſt rewarded, according to the reſpective improvement that each had made of his talents; and they become, as it were, aſſeſſors with their LORD on the fate of the bad: for, *the ſaints ſhall judge the world*[a].

In the diſtribution of rewards to the good, how comfortable is it to think, that not only a few (who, like the eaſtern prince juſt now mentioned, have been remarkably eminent for their good works and royal bounty) ſhall on that day have their charity moſt amply recompenſed? The pious women who miniſtered of their little ſubſtance to JESUS[b]; and thouſands who from

[a] 1 Cor. vi. 2. [b] Luke viii. 8.

from an equally ſcanty ſtore miniſtered to his followers; Dorcas who made coats for the poor; the good Samaritan who took up the wounded traveller, and, out of the ſmall proviſion which he had for his own journey, gave the hoſt a two-pence; the poor widow who threw the two mites, which were her *all*, into the treaſury of the temple; he who gave only a drink of cold water to a diſciple, as a diſciple; and he who had no more than a ſigh, a tear, or a prayer, to beſtow on the miſery of his brother;—theſe may perhaps, on that day, ſtand foremoſt in the rank of thoſe who loved GOD and their brethren, and may carry off the firſt rewards of charity. What though their bounties were not large, nor their donations ſplendid? yet no king or emperor was more liberal. They wiſhed to make all mankind happy. And He who ſaw the earneſt wiſhes of their heart, and their vaſt fund of impotent charity, accepts and rewards the will inſtead of the deed, which he himſelf had not put in their power.—Why ſhould men expect much where but

little has been given, ſeeing GOD, to teach us to be merciful, doth not require it? If the ground in which he dropt but a ſingle grain, produce one fertile ear of corn, he is as well pleaſed as with a whole harveſt from a field on which more pains have been beſtowed, and in which a larger quantity of ſeed has been ſcattered. On that day, only he who *hid his talent* uſeleſs *in a napkin*, will allege that GOD is a hard maſter, who gathers where he did not ſcatter, and reaps where he did not ſow[a].

As our SAVIOUR hath made brotherly love and charity the diſtinguiſhing badge of his diſciples on earth; ſo hath he intimated, that a very principal part of the inquiry, on the great day of retribution, will turn upon works of charity. Bleſſed, indeed, are they who have given ſuch proof of their love to JESUS and to mankind, as tokeep this new and ſpecial commandment. No ſurer ſign can they have of their right to the tree of life, and of their meetneſs to *enter in through the gates into*

[a] Mat. xxv. 24.

into the city[a].—You therefore, who, in obedience to this law of love, have *visited the fatherless and the widow in their affliction*; you who have relieved the poor, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and taken in the stranger; you who have visited the sick and the prisoner; who have poured balm into the broken heart, and wine and oil into the wounded spirit;—now lift up your astonished heads with joy, and see on whom you conferred the obligation. You thought it had been only on man, but it was on JESUS himself, and great shall be your reward in his kingdom: For, inasmuch as you have done it to the least of his brethren, you have done it unto him[b].

But although a principal share of this day's inquiry and rewards may relate to works of charity, yet no other virtue of any kind or degree whatever, that sprung either from a regard to GOD or man, shall pass unnoticed or unrewarded. Every one virtuous thought, or word, or action, will

[a] Rev. xxii. 14. [b] Mat. xxv. 40.

add a proportionable weight of happineſs to every good man's character; or will deduct ſo much from the weight of his miſery, if he has been upon the whole a bad man. No perſon who laid a ſingle ſtone in the walls of Jeruſalem, who lifted any weapon in the Chriſtian warfare, or fought any battle under the banner of JESUS, ſhall on that day be forgoten. Although that *book of remembrance*[a], in which thoſe things were recorded by the finger of GOD, had not at all been written; yet would there be no danger that the memory of GOD and angels ſhould, herein, fail. For they, very unlike the moſt of men, can forget nothing, but the evil of which we have repented.—Whatever, therefore, our talents may be, here is encouragement to improve them with all poſſible zeal and fidelity. For we are aſſured that thou, O munificent King! wilt not overlook the leaſt ſpark of genuine virtue, nor ſuffer even our partial and imperfect goodneſs

[a] Mal. iii. 16.

neſs to paſs without receiving its juſt recompenſe of reward.

—Who, then, that hath the ambition of a man, can ſee ſo many thouſand faithful ſervants applauded with a *well done* by their LORD, and mingling with joy among his friends; ſome for the improvement of one talent, and ſome for that of another; ſome for the improvement of more, and ſome of fewer; who, I ſay, can behold all theſe on the right hand of the Judge, and not earneſtly endeavour, by the due improvement of whatever his Maſter hath intruſted with him, to have a ſhare in their glory, and to bear away ſome of the palms and crowns which ſhall on this day be diſtributed?—Let us fix our eyes a little on ſome of the happy number, and obſerve what a vaſt reward their eminent virtue, of one kind or another, hath procured to them. And oh! may this view incline our hearts to imitate their virtue and piety, and to tread in their footſteps to glory!

§ 3. FIRST, then, behold there the holy Patriarchs who truſted in GOD, and who prepared to meet this day, when they ſaw it even afar off. How complete is now the rejoicing of that father of the faithful, who, ſo many thouſand years ago, exulted at the proſpect of this great day of the Son of man? The earneſt interceſſion which he made in behalf of others, procured for himſelf the interceſſion of JESUS; and the prayers which he put up for ſinners, return now with intereſt to his own boſom. O Abraham! what a proof doſt thou now receive of the high regard which *the Judge of all the earth* has not only to right[a], but alſo to mercy? For, lo! thy faith is accounted unto thee for righteouſneſs; and thy ſon, *thine only ſon Iſaac, whom thou lovedſt*, is now reſtored to thee, beyond the poſſibility of another ſeparation. For, *God had provided himſelf a lamb for an offering: in the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen*[b].

How conſpicuous appears, on this day, the wiſdom of Noah, who took warning to

[a] Gen. xviii. 25. [b] Gen. xxii. 14.

to flee from the wrath to come, and prepared a better ark than that which saved him from the waters. A singular piety hath procured him, and all others possessed of the same grace, a very high and singular degree of glory. God will *establish with him his everlasting covenant*, although the bow shall no more be seen in the heavens [a].

And see! how glad is the countenance of Lot, *whose righteous soul was vexed from day to day* with seeing and hearing the sins of Sodom! Every tear, which he shed for the guilt of that unhappy place, is wiped away from his eyes; even that drop which had just now swelled at the sight of their second punishment. But it appears that his tears have been all numbered. God stored up every one of them *in his bottle*: and lo! they are now remembered. Each of them is a pearl in that immortal diadem with which the Judge hath crowned him.—Into that city of God, in which he shall henceforth dwell, there shall enter

[a] Gen. ix. 9, 13.

nothing that defileth; nor ſhall there be *any thing that offendeth* in all GOD's holy mountain. No claſhing of intereſts, no quarrel of the herdſmen, nor ſcarcity of wells of water, ſhall force the good man any more to forego the ſociety of his holy and beloved relatives [a]. For, that *river, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God*, is more than ſufficient to ſupply all the wants, and all the wiſhes, of the inhabitants. With gladneſs, he now recognizes the Angel of the covenant, who formerly ſaved his life, and pulled him out of Sodom, and ſeems to acknowledge his manifold obligations to him with gratitude:—*Behold now, thy ſervant hath found grace in thy ſight, and thou haſt magnified thy mercy* [b].

See Joſeph raiſed from the priſon of the tomb, by one who was not ſo unmindful of him as Pharoah's butler. See him advanced to a pitch of glory infinitely higher than what was conferred upon him by the Egyptian monarch. His pure and undefiled ſoul now rejoices at the ſight of that GOD,

[a] Gen. xiii. 8. [b] Gen. xix. 19.

GOD, the very thought of whoſe inviſible preſence was, formerly, ſufficient to blunt the keeneſt weapon of the Tempter.—When the world threw into the ſcale all that it had to offer; pleaſure, profit, honour: When the Devil ſuperadded all his weight and influence, choſe the moſt convenient ſeaſon, and uſed the moſt urgent ſolicitation; came too in the ſhape, looked with the eye, and ſpoke with the tongue, of a great and beautiful woman: And when, to all this, the third grand enemy, the fleſh, or corrupt nature of man, joined all the aid which it could give to caſt the balance:—All, all was light as a feather, oppoſed to the ſingle thought of ſinning againſt GOD in his holy preſence.—*How can I do this great evil, and ſin againſt God*[a]*?*

Glorious conqueror over temptation! worthy to be the type of Him who overcame the world, and conquered Sin, Death, and Hell; how much do the ſlaves of guilty pleaſure envy on this day thy happineſs!

Now,

[a] Gen. xxxix. 9.

Now, too late, do they ſee their own madneſs, and feel the fatal effects of that gilded poiſon, which, though ſweet in the mouth, like the Prophet's roll, is in the digeſting unſpeakably bitter[a]. Although their guilty pleaſure had, like thoſe creatures in St John's viſion[b], the beautiful *face of a man*, or of an angel; yet it has alſo, like them, *the teeth of lions and the tails of ſcorpions.*— But our buſineſs at preſent is not to dwell on the view of thoſe unhappy beings whom falſe pleaſure had deluded.

—" To Heaven let us leave them,
And thoſe thongs that in their boſom lodge
To goad and ſting them."

Behold how the face of Moſes ſhines with a luſtre infinitely more reſplendent than that which he brought down from the hill of Sinai, or that which afterwards he wore on Tabor. It is the harveſt which has ſprung from that ſeed of holineſs and meekneſs which he ſowed in his wayfaring through the wilderneſs. The one or two little blemiſhes, which were once ſeen in his character, were buried with his body in

[a] Rev. x. 9. [b] Rev. ix. 7, 10.

in that unknown grave, from which they ſhall never riſe to bar his entrance into a better *land of promiſe* than Canaan [a]. No; the *name* of ſo faithful a ſervant, and ſo powerful an interceſſor with GOD for his people, is not, ſhall never be, *blotted out of the book which* GOD *hath written* [b]. Already hath he renewed his former intimacy with his MAKER; and can now behold even the face of GOD and not die, but live on that account. Now alſo he ſhall have the privilege of converſing with him, not only for *forty days*, but for Eternity.—In the ecſtacy of his joy, on ſeeing that GOD, whom unſeen he obeyed and loved; he bids again the heavens give ear, till he ſing once more his ſong, and aſcribe mercy as well as majeſty unto his GOD [c].

See alſo the man of *Uz*, bright in the reward of his well-tried and well-approved patience. He endured formerly the furnace of affliction, and came forth from it like gold, which is rendered purer by the fire. Therefore the laſt fire hath had no power

[a] Deut. iii. 25. [b] Exod. xxxii. 32. [c] Deut. xxxii.

power over him to hurt him. Once he *heard of God by the hearing of the ear*, but now he ſees him face to face. See with what joy he beholds that REDEEMER in whom, ſo long ago, he truſted. *I know*, ſaid he, *that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God*[a].

According to his faith, ſo hath it happened unto him. His body, though once a prey to putrefaction and to worms, is now raiſed in glory to enjoy for ever the beatific viſion of that SAVIOUR, whom by the far-penetrating eye of faith he once deſcried at ſuch a diſtance; even when the corruption of the grave, a long revolution of ages, and a dark diſpenſation, had all intervened.—" Bleſſed, (he now ſeems to ſay), be the day whereon I was born, and the night in which it was ſaid, There is a man-child conceived! For now GOD will no more hide himſelf from me: I know where I may find him; I can come even

[a] Job xix. 25, 26.

even to his ſeat; and, O bleſſed privilege, may dwell for ever there!"

All the angels of heaven, with an innumerable crowd of ſuch as once were widows, orphans, deſtitute and poor, join their Amen! to the good man's happineſs.—Such is the end of patience, and ſuch the reward of charity!

§ 4. WITH the Patriarchs behold next the Prophets; a glad tribe! from holy heaven-wafted Enoch, down to him of Patmos. The poor *rough garment*, the ancient garb of the prophets [a], is now converted into a robe of glory; and that zeal of theirs which boldly reproved vice, and which, overlooking every injury and offence offered only to themſelves, kindled, quick as lightning, at every diſhonour offered to their GOD;—this zeal receives now the reward of its fidelity; and, meeting no more with any thing that ſhall offend, melts down into the milder flame of love; the ſtrong cement of the heavenly fo-

[a] 2 Kings i. 8. & Mat. iii. 4.

ſociety, and the bond which unites the whole to GOD.

Henceforth, this bleſſed company are to be inhabitants of that Jeruſalem which ſhall not ſtone the prophets, nor kill or grieve the meſſengers of GOD. Now they all ſee, what only one of them ſaw before, *the holy city, the new Jeruſalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared* to receive them, *as a bride adorned for her huſband*[a]. They ſee it, and are ready to break forth, with new faculties, into new ſongs of praiſe.—Ye heirs of glory! it were indeed a wonder, if, at the proſpect of ſuch felicity as you have now before you, ye were not overjoyed, tranſported, raviſhed.—*Glorious things are ſpoken of thee, O city of God! Selah.*

See David *ſatisfied with God's likeneſs*, and enraptured at ſeeing this *city of God* infinitely more *glorious* than any thing that was ever conceived or *ſpoken of it*. He ſtands with his *heart fixed*, bidding, as it were, his *pſaltery and his harp awake, and ſing*

[a] Rev. xxi.

ſing praiſe even with his glory. Never were the ſtrains of this ſweet ſinger of Iſrael ſo divine as now.—" GOD is our refuge and our ſtrength: therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midſt of the ſea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains ſhake with the ſwellings thereof. Selah.—There is a river, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of GOD; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Moſt High. GOD is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved: GOD ſhall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged; the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of Hoſts is with us, the GOD of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.—Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be lifted up, ye everlaſting doors! that the KING of Kings, and the heirs of glory, may enter in[a]."

Behold Elijah! clothed with a glory, correſponding in its brightneſs to the ar-

dour

[a] Pſ. xlvi. & xxiv.

dour of his zeal. His glorified body now, without the help of a fiery car, can keep pace with his heaven-aſcending ſpirit [a]. Where he ſtands here, the hand of Ahab cannot reach him. A ſtronger and more viſible guard, than what was granted to his diſciple at Dothan, ſurrounds him. The prophets of Baal can contend with him no longer. They themſelves are vanquiſhed, and their god is ſtill *aſleep or on a journey*. Or, rather, the *idol was nothing*, when the loud call of the Laſt Trumpet did not awake him. Happy had it been for his four hundred and fifty prophets, and his other votaries, if they too had been allowed to reſt in everlaſting ſlumbers! But they muſt know by one other fearful proof, whether JEHOVAH or Baal be God; excepting thoſe, who, at the inſtance of the prophet of GOD, happily repented and returned to their allegiance [b].

Happy prophet! who haſt been ſo zealous for the LORD GOD of hoſts! What tho' thou waſt in poverty and in want; perſecuted

[a] 2 Kings ii. 11. [b] 1 Kings xviii.

fecuted from mountain to mountain, and forced to fly for ſafety to the ſolitary deſarts, and the lonely caves of the rocks?—yet all theſe things are now over; and, unleſs it be in the increaſe of thy reward, and in the more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which they wrought for thee, there is no remembrance or memorial that ſuch grievances ever afflicted thee. No; the fountain of life that flows from the throne of GOD, that ſtream which waters paradiſe, and whereof thou ſhalt henceforth drink, ſhall never, like the brook of Cherith, fail. Nor ſhall the fruit of the ever-yielding tree of life, which is in the midſt of the garden of GOD, even with length of years or ages, be reduced to little. Ravens need no longer, in the mornings and evenings, bring thee food; nor need angels themſelves, as in the way to Horeb, ſpread any more for thee a table. For *thou ſhalt hunger no more, nor thirſt any more;* for the Lamb himſelf, who is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall with his ſecret manna feed thee [a].

[a] 1 Kings xvii. & Rev. vii. 16, 17.

See! with what gladneſs Eliſha recognizes his maſter, and rejoices that he is no more to be taken away from him. He is, however, more ambitious now of getting hold of another and more glorious mantle than Elijah's; even of HIS who gave to that of the Tiſhbite all its virtue. See! with how firm a graſp he holds the hem of it, where it ſtreams, a flood of light, from the feet of the Judge.

That widow whoſe oil he multiplied, ſtill multiplies bleſſings on his head, for ſatisfying the demands of the rapacious creditor [2]. But ſhe ſeems to be overwhelmed with grateful aſtoniſhment, and to labour for expreſſion, when ſhe would acknowledge the mercy of HIM who paid for her a debt that was infinitely greater. —" And was this glorious Being himſelf my ranſom! his blood, his ſoul, the price of mine! O JESUS, what didſt thou ſee in me, that thou ſhould'ſt thus love me!— Angels, can you pry into the myſtery! Seraphs, have you a voice to praiſe it!"

Nor

[2] 2 Kings. iv.

Nor leſs is the gratitude of that Shunamite to this prophet, and to the GOD of the prophets; now that ſhe ſtands with her ſon reſtored to her a ſecond time from the hand of the King of terrors. Behold, ſhe is inveſted with the reward of a prophet; for a prophet, as ſuch, had been entertained by her. In return, *the man of God ſpoke to the King, to the Captain of this hoſt*, in her behalf, and obtained for her the glorious privilege of dwelling for ever among his own people. The little chamber on the wall, with its ſimple furniture, is now amply recompenſed with an everlaſting manſion in the heavenly city. Now only doth it appear with what peculiar propriety the inſpired writer called her a *great woman*[a].

But is not that other ſtill greater, who built for more than one man of GOD an houſe, in their wayfaring through the world; and for more than one people a place of worſhip! Can any man or angel tell what reward is prepared for ſuch a

[a] 2 Kings iv. 8.

regard to the meſſengers of GOD, and ſuch love to the ſouls of his people?—Yes, I remember the promiſe; it is the rank and the reward of a prophet [a].—I ſee the city built by GOD, and the temple not made with hands; and I ſee what is infinitely more, what implies a bliſs ineffable by all the angels in heaven, ſhould they attempt to deſcribe it. It is that complacent ſmile on the face of the Judge; which conſtitutes the very eſſence of heaven, and ſpeaks in a language a thouſand times more expreſſive than the words which accompany it, WELL DONE, *good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*

Happy and wiſe application of riches and of power! Thouſands who once called it folly, now commend it; and vow, that if they had but once more the opportunity, they would improve it better, in making to themſelves *friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs* [b]; and that they would not allow their ſouls to periſh together with their gold and their ſilver.

And

[a] Mat. x. 41. [b] Luke xvi. 9.

And if all who befriended a prophet for the ſake of his LORD, ſhall on this day have a prophet's reward, how great, Obadiah, muſt be thy felicity; who, at the hazard of thine own life, didſt hide an hundred of them in a cave, and feed them with bread and water [a]! All heaven would weep, and angels themſelves be unhappy, if ſuch love to GOD, and to his meſſengers, did not meet with the higheſt recompenſe of reward. Yes, patron of religion in the worſt of times! the prayers of an hundred prophets in thy behalf, were heard. *Bread*, ſuch as angels eat, *ſhall* now *be given thee; and thy waters*, in the fountain of life, *ſhall be ſure*. At the head of thy prophetic band, thou ſhalt now ſtand in thy lot, with Elijah; where Ahab is no more to be dreaded, and where thou needeſt not flee for thy life from the face of Jezebel. No more need any of you pour out his ſoul *under the juniper-tree* in bitterneſs, nor flee for ſhelter to the caves of the deſart [b].

[a] 1 Kings xiii. 4. [b] 1 Kings xix. 4.

The LORD of hoſts is with you, and your refuge is the GOD of Jacob.

Obſerve, next, that evangelical prophet, exulting with joy at the preſence of IMMANUEL; and beholding the Meſſiah, according to his own ancient prophecy, now *exalted, and extolled, and very high*[a]. With what heavenly complacency does he now ſee how much accrues to his LORD from the *travail of his ſoul*; how great the multitude of his children is *from the barren that did not bear*, and what vaſt *forces of the Gentiles are come to him*[b]! Now only does he uderſtand the full meaning of his own prophecy. Even *his* enlarged ſoul could not, till now, conceive the meaning of the words to have been ſo extenſive. Even *his* keen prophetic eye could not, till now, dart its glance ſo far as to take in all the children of the Meſſiah's kingdom, nor comprehend in its view any thing equal to the vaſt numbers of the ſaved. But now, at the ecſtatic ſight, his ſoul expands with joy; and his hallowed lips, *touched*

as

[a] Iſ. lii. 13. [b] Iſ. liii. 11. liv. 1. & lx. 5.

as it were a second time with *heavenly fire*, are ready to break out once more into his former rapture, and to cry in a higher sense, *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: Spare not; lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes, for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left* with thy numbers [a].

Behold, it is done! *Twelve thousand furlongs, such as angels mete*, is the length, and as much the breadth, and as much the height, of the new Jerusalem [a]. A goodly city! worthy of its builder GOD! A little moment longer, great prophet! and thou shalt see thine own words in the highest sense accomplished. *The ransomed of the Lord shall enter into Zion with songs; and everlasting joy shall be on their heads:* they shall obtain joy and gladness; *and sorrow and sighing shall flee away* [c]. In that city none of the inhabitants shall say any more, *I am sick;* nor shall there be any tool to saw asunder the messengers of GOD.—And

[a] Is. liv. 2, 3. [b] Rev. xxi. 16, 17. [c] Is. xxxv. 10.

what though this was once the fate [a], great favourite of Heaven! it may now be deemed thy chief privilege, and thy greateſt honour. All thy wounds are healed; all thy pains forgotten; and no memorial of thy paſt woes is to be found, ſave in thoſe ſcars of glory, which tell how much thou didſt once ſuffer. One almoſt thinks they bear ſome faint reſemblance to thoſe glorious marks in the hands and feet of the Judge.—Bleſſed, above expreſſion, are they who have not only died in the LORD, but alſo for him; *for henceforth they reſt from their labours, and their works ſhall follow them!*

See Daniel, after having awaked from the ſleep of the duſt to everlaſting life, ſhining as a ſtar of the firſt magnitude in this day's glorious firmament. Now does he

[a] The Prophet Iſaiah, according to the tradition of the Jews and of the Chriſtian fathers, was put to death by king Manaſſeh, who cauſed him to be ſawn aſunder with a wooden ſaw, in order to render his death the more painful.—The death of this ſaint, ſo *precious in the ſight of God*, is alluded to in the epiſtle to the Hebrews, xi. 37.

he clearly see and understand those mysteries which were formerly concealed from him, till, after his rest, he should stand in his lot at the end of time [a]. With what holy wonder and delight does he now behold what so long ago he saw in his vision, *the throne set, the Ancient of days sitting upon it; the thousand thousands ministering unto him, and the ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him* [b]! No Gabriel now needs tell him how *greatly* he is *beloved*. He himself can read the regard which GOD hath to him, in the countenance of the Judge; who hath delivered him, according to his faith, from a more dreadful den than that of the lions; and rescued him, and those three children beside him, from a more terrible fire than the seven-times-heated furnace of the king of Persia.—Blessed are thy servants, O LORD! *for there is no other god that can deliver after this manner.*

Observe, with this, that other prophet, whose joy is now as great as his grief was formerly. The *chain*, the *dungeon*, and the abuse

[a] Dan. xii. [b] Dan. vii. 9, 10.

abuſe which he met with, are now no longer remembered. The LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, for whoſe ſake thoſe ſufferings were endured, hath amply recompenſed them.—Bleſſed Jeremiah! no more needeſt thou wiſh that thy *head were waters*, and thine *eyes a fountain of tears*, that thou mighteſt weep night and day for the ſins of thy people [a]. Neither needeſt thou wiſh any more for *a lodging-place in the wilderneſs*, whither thou mighteſt retire from their pollutions. No; for, according to thy own prophecy, the time is now fully come, in which *the iniquity of Iſrael*, of all the Iſrael of GOD, who only are thy people, *ſhall be ſought for, and there ſhall be none; and the ſins of Judah, but they ſhall not be found; for God hath pardoned them whom he hath reſerved* [b].

Happy they whoſe ſouls, with this choſen remnant, have been gathered! If all worlds ſhould fail, and all ſyſtems periſh, they are ſafe: for, *the everlaſting arms are underneath them*; and they can, in every poſſible con-

[a] Jer. ix. 1, 2. [d] Jer. l. 20.

conjuncture, *rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their ſalvation.*

§ 5. FROM the holy prophets let us now turn our eyes, for a little, to theſe glorified apoſtles, whoſe bliſs ſeems to exceed that of the prophets as much as the diſpenſation they lived under was more glorious. Behold them, ſeated on twelve thrones around their LORD, as aſſeſſors in his judgment; and, in a different ſenſe than formerly, made a *ſpectacle to* all the world of *angels and of men* [a]. Acccording to the word in which they truſted, ſince formerly they ſuffered with him, now they reign with him. For, as they firmly believed, *neither tribulation, nor diſtreſs, nor perſecution, nor famine, nor nakedneſs, nor peril, nor ſword; neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, have been able to ſeparate them from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus their Lord* [b]. Formerly they were

[a] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [b] Rom. viii. 38, 39.

were reckoned the *filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, until this day,* on which it appears that their life and their glory *were hid with Chriſt in God.*

Happy band! well was it worth your while (and, I truſt, ours who labour with you), to follow your LORD through bad report and good report; for, the ſufferings of the paſt life, how great ſoever, were not worthy to be once compared with the glory which is now revealed. Your affliction, which was but for a moment, wrought for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

See the beloved diſciple leaning ſtill on the boſom of his LORD, and now conformed to his image in *glory*, as he had formerly been in *love*. Now he can behold the FIRST *and the* LAST in a more effulgent light than that at Patmos, and neither *fall down as dead*, nor yet be afraid [a]. Now he beholds in reality, thoſe aſtoniſhing ſcenes which he formerly ſaw in a viſion. The revealing angel ſtill ſtands beſide

[a] Rev. i. 17.

beſide him: but the Judge himſelf ſuperſedes, on this day, his office; and reads clearly every page of that book, the ſeals of which he only *is worthy to looſe*. Who would not *weep much* if the Mighty One of the tribe of Judah, had not, with every other arduous taſk, undertaken this alſo for our ſake? At his doing ſo, the holy diſciple is ſo glad, that a tranſport of joy fills his eyes; and the benevolent angel, in a different ſenſe than formerly, may ſay unto him, *Weep not* [a].—But which is the man, and which the archangel?—Holy and favourite diſciple! great was thy reaſon to ſay, even after all the glorious revelations that were vouchſafed thee, that it did not yet appear what the ſaints were, one day, to be. No; eye did not ſee, ear did not hear, neither did it enter into the heart of man to conceive it, until now. And ſtill, the happineſs of being like GOD, and of ſeeing him as he is, is ſo vaſt, that it can only be felt but not deſcribed. Raviſhed with this felicity, St John is now

ready

[a] Rev. v. 5.

ready to bear a part in all the new celeſtial ſongs which formerly he heard, and to mingle with all the angelic choirs which formerly he ſaw, in his viſions in the iſle of Patmos. Hark! he begins his favourite theme, with a *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God. God is love! Beloved, let us love one another*[a]!

Peter, glad with exceeding joy, ſees a more excellent glory around him than that at Tabor; and finds it ſo good for him to be here, that *here* he could almoſt bear to build his tabernacle, and to take up his abode for ever. He ſees, with aſtoniſhment, how unneceſſary the feeble aid of his ſword was, to One who could command ſo many legions of angels as he now ſees about him. He ſees alſo the new heavens and the new earth which he looked for; and is, therefore, no more concerned about the diſſolution of the world, than he was formerly about putting off the tabernacle of the body[b]. Why ſhould he? for GOD doth more

[a] 1 John iii. 1. & iv. 7, 8. [b] 2 Pet. i. 14. & iii. 13, &c.

more than reſtore both the one and the other.—Diſſolve this tabernacle, then; or melt theſe elements; none of theſe things, O GOD, can affect thy ſervants; for thou thyſelf, who never changeſt, art their everlaſting portion, and haſt provided for them *an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Thomas, on ſeeing his LORD in ſo glorious a view, is loſt in aſtoniſhment at the remembrance of his condeſcenſion, when he bade him thruſt his hand into the mark of the ſpear in his ſide, in order to remove his obſtinate and unreaſonable doubting. In the ecſtaſy of his wonder, love, and gratitude, he ſeems again to find no utterance for any other words, ſave that expreſſive exclamation of *My Lord! and my God*[a]*!*

Matthew, who inſtantly obeyed the call to leave his all and follow JESUS, rejoices now in the accompliſhment of that promiſe which aſſured him, that no man left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mo-

[a] John xx. 28.

mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for the ſake of JESUS and the goſpel, but ſhould immediately receive an hundred fold, in bleſſings of a higher nature, and in the end eternal life [a]. Once, in the gratitude of his heart, he made for his LORD and his diſciples a great feaſt, which ſhall be repaid this day by the privilege of ſitting down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, at the marriage-ſupper of the LAMB in the kingdom of heaven.

The prayer which Jude put up for others, is now returned to his own boſom; for lo! he is *preſented blameleſs before the throne with exceeding joy*.—And James receives the reward of that living and operative faith which he preached, and which he practiſed [b]. But the immenſity of this glory makes him, and his other companions in tribulation, bow low before the throne with gratitude; and acknowledge, that the laſt mite of ſo inconceivable a reward could not be of debt, but—all of free grace!—Thrice happy diſciples! Who would not, for

[a] Luke v. 27—29. with Mark x. 29, 30. [b] James ii. 26.

for a ſhare in your glory, cheerfully follow you in all your labours of love; in all your painful ſufferings?—You who once, with abuſe of power, perſecuted this little band, how willingly would you now exchange conditions with them, and ſtand in their lot on this latter day? Ah! little did you think that the poor deſpicable Galileans ſhould ever be advanced to this; or that you, in your turn, ſhould lift your hands before their tribunal. But you ſhall, at the leaſt, receive a more impartial judgment than what you gave. And oh! who knoweth, but, as the fruit of their prayers in your behalf, your ſentence may be more tolerable than the ſtinted charity of men could ever have allowed!—Even your partial relentings, ye enemies of the ſaints, may, in conſequence of thoſe prayers, procure ſome mitigation of your ſufferings; and, perhaps, deduct from your fire ſome of that fuel which the moſt charitable on earth could not but dread ſhould be heaped on the pile of your burning!

But let us leave the reading of the book

of fate to Him who alone is *worthy to open the ſeals of it*, and behold that Chief Apoſtle, who, after having overcome, now ſitteth with the Judge upon his throne[a], and is ready to be caught up into the third heavens once more; not to viſit, but to dwell in it for ever. Still the *things* which he ſees are *unutterable*; but his very ſilence is expreſſive, and ſeems to proclaim louder than any voice, his aſtoniſhment at that PROFOUND of LOVE which he cannot fathom, and at that *myſtery of godlineſs*[b] which he cannot comprehend!—Behold him encircled with a far brighter glory than that which once ſurrounded him in the way to Damaſcus. See the marks of thoſe innumerable *ſtripes* and *ſtrokes*, which he endured for the ſake of the Judge, now ſtream over all his body in ſo many rays of glory. —Bleſſed apoſtle! how I envy thee thy ſufferings!—And ſee, in his face, he ſtill wears the marks of that *care which he daily had of all the churches*; as it were the undoubted ſignature of the LAMB upon his fore-

[a] Rev. iii. 21. [b] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

forehead!—His Theſſalonian converts, the chief *crown of his joy and rejoicing*, know him; and thouſands of nations and of ages, who never ſaw his face till now, know him, and join in bleſſing him.—They who ſtoned and ſcourged him, alſo know him; and ſee, what they little thought of, that every ſtone which they threw at him is become a gem in his crown; and every ſtripe which they laid upon him a ray of light in his robe of glory. Now, at length, they believe, what the Saint once told them, that *all things*, both good and evil, *work together for good to thoſe who love* GOD. Oh! that they had believed this ſooner, when the holy apoſtle preſſed it upon them ſo earneſtly, that, in a paroxyſm of zeal and love, which ſeems to have reached the utmoſt height to which thoſe ſacred paſſions could riſe in any created being, he almoſt wiſhed himſelf *accurſed from* CHRIST, could this procure their ſalvation, and redound more to GOD's glory.—Now, too late, they ſee their miſtake, in calling him a *fool for Chriſt*.—

And not only they, but the world in general, did liberally beſtow ſuch titles upon all thoſe whoſe zeal was moſt diſtinguiſhed, and whoſe love to GOD and to the ſouls of men was moſt ardent. But who does not on this day wiſh that he himſelf had *ſuffered* the like *reproach with the people of* GOD, that he might now have his lot among the happy number?

See, how paſſionately Felix wiſhes he had been in the place of that deſpiſed preacher of righteouſneſs who once reaſoned before him; but whoſe exhortations he fooliſhly diſmiſſed till *a more convenient ſeaſon*; a ſeaſon which never did, nor ever ſhall arrive. He now ſees the Apoſtle who warned him of this impending danger, and his trembling at the thoughts of the judgment ſeizes him a ſecond time [a]; but alas! to as little purpoſe now as it did formerly. —Agrippa, too, knows the Apoſtle who once pled his innocence, in bonds, before his tribunal [b]. Would to GOD, that thou, poor being! who didſt once wear a crown, hadſt

[a] Acts xxiv. 25. [b] Acts xxvi. 29.

hadſt been not only *almoſt* but *altogether* perſuaded to be a Chriſtian, and like unto Paul in all things, not even his bonds excepted! Then ſhouldeſt thou be ſtill a King.

And where art thou, Herod? Doſt thou not know that other perſon ſo conſpicuous in the preſence of the Judge; that perſon than whom there was never a greater among them that were born of women? Does not that illuſtrious circle of glory about his neck, the mark of his having been beheaded, tell thee who it is? Or rather, does not thy awakened conſcience, with greater certainty as well as anguiſh than it did before, tell thee, that this is John the Baptiſt, riſen from the dead; even that John who was, by thee, beheaded[a]? ——The day on which this bloody deed was committed, was thy birth-day, holy ſufferer! and not Herod's. Bands of angels, who were thy attendants in thy bonds and in thy priſon, longed more for that *convenient day*, on which they were to tranſ-

[a] Mat. xiv. 1, 2.

ſport thee to Paradiſe, than did even the bloody and revengeful Herodias. With ecſtatic gladneſs theſe bore thy ſoul to bliſs, whilſt thy mournful diſciples gathered up thy mangled body to pay it the laſt duty. And what though no coſtly monument, of marble or of braſs, pointed out thy lowly ſepulchre? yet guardian angels well knew it; and, till every *indignation was overpaſt*, ſpread over it their wings, as a ſafe pavilion. Zealous harbinger, and faithful witneſs! thou haſt ſealed thy teſtimony with thy blood; and now, *behold* that *kingdom of heaven is at hand*, where thou ſhalt receive the crown of martyrdom, and where thou ſhalt for ever rejoice in the preſence of thy REDEEMER. Inſtead of ſojourning in the wilderneſs, thou ſhalt dwell henceforth with the aſſembly of the Firſtborn, and with the ſpirits of the juſt, in the heavenly city: And, inſtead of Herod's dungeon, the temple of the living GOD and the palace of the Eternal King ſhall be thy manſion.—There, the hidden manna, and not the *locuſts* of the wilder-

neſs,

neſs, ſhall be thy food; and the converſe of the heavenly ſociety ſhall be ſweeter to thy ſoul, than the *wild honey* was ever to thy taſte. There, no troubles from without, no doubts from within, ſhall any more diſtreſs thee; nor wilt thou any more aſk, *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another*[a]? No; the ſhadow of ſuch a deſponding thought can never reach thee, where GOD himſelf ſhall be thy light, and thy GOD thy glory!

§ 6. I SEE, next, the firſt martyr Stephen, with *his face as it were the face of an angel*, taking a nearer and more ſtedfaſt view than ever, of the heavens opened, and of the glory of his ſmiling Saviour. And, O miracle of grace! ſee, beſide him, many of thoſe who gave their aſſent to his death, and their aſſiſtance to ſtone him. But it appears that his prayer in their behalf was heard, and GOD *did not lay that ſin to their charge* when they repented[b]. How *much availeth the fervent prayer of a righteous man!*

[a] Mat. xi. 3.

[b] Acts vii. 60.

And who is a God like unto our GOD, ſo abundant in mercy, and forgiving ſuch iniquity and ſins!

And ſee! what a glorious army, all together, of Martyrs, Confeſſors, and Witneſſes, *who were ſlain for the Word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held.* Now is that word of promiſe more than fulfilled to them, That whoſoever would lay down his life for the ſake of JESUS and his goſpel, ſhould again find it.—Now, happy exchange! inſtead of a temporal, earthly, and wretched exiſtence, of which perhaps but a few days had been cut off, they find a happy, heavenly, and eternal life.—How little do theſe holy ſouls, of whom the world was not worthy, now feel of all the trials which they had *of cruel mockings, and ſcourgings, and bonds, and impriſonments?* How little of their wandering about *in ſheep-ſkins and in goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented,* and forced to live, like wild beaſts that had been hunted, *in deſarts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth*[a].

Lo!

[a] Heb. xi. 36—38.

Lo! they are clothed in robes of white, more reſplendent than ever wore the emperors who ſlew them. Mark the undeſcribable tranſports of theſe *ſouls that cried ſo loud* and ſo long *under the altar*, when now they find the long-wiſhed-for day of retribution is come, and the number of their *fellow-ſervants and fellow-ſufferers is fulfilled*[a]. Mark! how bright a crown the Judge is placing upon their heads. It is *the crown of life;* for, theſe have all been *faithful unto the death, reſiſted unto blood, and counted not even their lives dear*, if they might but attain to this glorious felicity, which they ſo ardently purſued.—The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence; and theſe, with their holy violence, have as it were taken it by force.

Next to theſe, in order and in likeneſs, behold thoſe other thouſands who paſſed through great tribulations, endured for the ſake of JESUS and his religion; and who ſtill retained their integrity: thoſe who purified in fiery trials, and cleanſed in ſeas of

[a] Rev. vi. 10, 11.

trouble, thoſe robes which yet could be waſhed ſo white only by the blood of the LAMB [a].—See among them, not only thoſe who followed JESUS with their croſs on their ſhoulders; but thoſe alſo, who, with no leſs trouble, crucified their luſts within them. Not only thoſe who boldly *confeſſed* JESUS; but thoſe likewiſe, who, in different circumſtances, ſhowed perhaps no leſs fortitude in *not denying* him. Not only thoſe who did actual good with their hand, or tongue, or heart; but thoſe too, who, under ſtrong temptations to the contrary, refrained their tongue, their hand, and their heart, from evil. Not only thoſe who *did* the will of GOD with boldneſs, as Joſhua and Sampſon; but thoſe alſo, who, with more heroic virtue, *bore* it with patience. Such was Aaron, who *held his peace* when GOD ſmote him [b]; Eli, who bowed his gray head, and aſſented to the ſevereſt chaſtening from the hand of the LORD [c]; and that other who bleſſed his name when he recalled his favours [d].

He

[a] Rev. vii. 14. [b] Lev. x. 3. [c] 1 Sam. iii. [d] Job i. 21.

He who had appointed unto all men their different poſts and their different trials, as well as endowed them with different abilities to maintain thoſe poſts and to go through thoſe trials, now rewards for their fidelity thouſands of ſouls, whom the moſt charitable of their brethren, who knew neither their talents nor their trials, too raſhly cenſured and condemned.—As every member in the human body hath its particular office, ſo hath, likewiſe, every member in the myſtical body of JESUS. And as the eye doth not deſpiſe the hand, nor the hand the foot; ſo neither ſhould any member of the body of CHRIST look down upon another, for having fewer talents; or, what he may think, a leſs honourable ſtation. If every part performs its proper office, it is enough. As GOD doth not aſk, ſo man ſhould not require any more.

It is with the building of the *ſpiritual*, as it was with that of the *material* Jeruſalem. Some in the ſervice are endowed with ſkill to work in gold, in ſilver, and in ſilk; others can only cut wood and hew ſtone.

Yet

Yet theſe laſt may be as neceſſary as the firſt; and, if they have acted their part well, cannot fail of being accepted and rewarded, without being blamed for not ſhining in a ſphere in which Providence did not place them. What our office was, or what were our talents, is not ſo much the inquiry on this day, as whether or not we have faithfully diſcharged that office, and duly improved thoſe talents. And of this the OMNISCIENT alone can be the proper and the only judge. His eyes may have ſeen thouſands of ſouls pant, and toil, and ſtrive to the very utmoſt of their ſtrength, in the ſecret and ſilent exerciſe of ſome good, or in coping with trials and temptations which to the eye of the world were altogether inviſible, and, till this day, unknown. Yet He who *beheld them in ſecret*, will now *reward them openly*; having marked down their names among the moſt faithful of his ſervants, when we were ready to cenſure them as idle loiterers in the great vineyard of their Maſter. When I ſee ſo many of this character ſtand at the

right

right hand of the Judge, far more (ſhame to my charity!) than I once thought to have ſeen, I wonder not at his having inculcated CHARITY, CHARITY, ſo often and ſo ſtrongly; nor at his having enjoined his diſciples *not to judge* others with ſeverity, leſt they ſhould be ſo judged themſelves.——O CHARITY! thou loveliеſt and moſt laſting of virtues! thou faireſt ornament of the man! thou diſtinguiſhing badge, and almoſt eſſence, of the Chriſtian! thou glory of the angel, thou fruit of the ſpirit, thou offspring and darling of heaven! thou emanation from the loveliеſt attribute and brighteſt name of GOD, and thou element in which the angels and the bleſſed breathe!—come, occupy my heart, dwell in my boſom, fill all the capacity of my ſoul!—Henceforth, thy room in this breaſt ſhall be enlarged; no dark paſſion ſhall, for a moment, rival thee in an hair-breadth of it. The poſſeſſion of it always ſhall be thine; together with thine elder ſiſter, LOVE TO GOD.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The View of the Bleſſed continued: with ſome Obſervations on the Oeconomy of Grace, and on the Diſpenſations of Providence.

§ 1. A View (chiefly) of ſome general Characters among the Bleſſed. § 2. Of the power and freeneſs of the Grace of CHRIST. § 3. Of the vaſt variety of its operations. § 4. The ſame ſubject continucd. § 5. Of the ſeeming inequalities in the diſpenſations of Providence; § 6.—and of Grace;—both vindicated; § 7.—and illuſtrated by ſome inſtances;—with a general View of the Bleſſed.

§ 1. HOW delightful is it to contemplate the glad hoſts of the Bleſſed on the right hand of JESUS! On this proſpect our eyes might dwell for ever with pleaſure, yet never be able to run through all the orders of that glorious and happy multitude. For, who can count all the *fair colours and pleaſant ſtones* that make up the new Jeruſalem [a]?—Behold? *there* ſtand

[a] Iſa. liv. 11. 12.

ſtand the tender-hearted maſters, who, with the moſt affectionate concern for the temporal and eternal intereſts of their ſervants, acted towards them the part of parents, remembering that they themſelves had *ſuch a Maſter in heaven*. And behold ſervants who were faithful to their maſters, obeying them not with eye-ſervice, but in ſingleneſs of heart, as ſerving the LORD, from whom they expected to receive their chief reward.—Behold parents who, by precept and example, trained up their children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD, now preſenting them to the Judge with a *Behold here are we, and the children whom thou haſt given us.* And ſee children who were dutiful and affectionate to their parents now receiving eternal life as their reward, in the Chriſtian's *land of promiſe*.

See! with what mutual congratulations meet *there*, the miniſters who were faithful to their LORD, and watchful over the ſouls of their people; and the people who loved their miniſters, and gladly hearkened

to

to their embaſſy. Joy gliſtens in their eyes; and their former relation, with all its tender ties, knits as it were their ſouls anew.—Mark! with what exceeding gladneſs meet that faithful paſtor and that affectionate flock of which he had once the charge. He had indeed been unto them as a father, and his bowels always yearned over them with compaſſion and love. He embraced every opportunity of exhorting each; of edifying all. In private, he bore their names upon his heart before GOD [a]; and in public, he never amuſed them with trifles, nor gave them inſtead of bread a ſtone; for, his doctrine was always plain, ſerious, and important. He pointed out the direct road to heaven; and in his own life he led the way. Like a true miniſter of the goſpel of peace, and one to whom was committed the word of reconciliation, he laboured to eſtabliſh and maintain peace between man and man, as well as between man and GOD. His whole life was one labour of love, the overflowings of a ſoul fraught

[a] Exod. xxviii. 29.

fraught with love to GOD and man. On earth he lived like a citizen of heaven and an heir of glory; far above the world even while he was in it. In public and in private life he was uniformly the ſame: the character inſcribed on every thing he ſaid and did was *Holineſs to the Lord*[b]. In all his conduct men conſidered him as an almoſt-angel; angels, as a ſaint; and GOD, as a child of grace and a follower of JESUS. With what zeal, and tears, and prayers, and intreaties, did he warn his people to flee from wrath; and exhort them, in preſence of GOD and of angels, to lay hold of eternal life, and to accept of the goſpel-call! His warnings, invitations, and importunities, were irreſiſtible. With a holy violence he, as it were, compelled them to enter in. Indeed, when he had firſt won their hearts, the way was open to win their ſouls. Their ſouls *were* won. As their father, they honoured him; as the ambaſſador of GOD, they revered him; and as the friend of their ſouls, they loved him,

[b] Exod. xxviii. 36.

inſomuch that, *if poſſible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him*[a]. In conſequence of this love, which is always of a complying and aſſimilating nature, they were *perſuaded to be Chriſtians, and in all things like unto him.*—See! how he *joys over his children with ſinging*, and preſents them with gladneſs before the LORD. And ſee! how they bleſs him as the inſtrument of their ſalvation under GOD; and as the parent who *travailed in birth with them again, till Chriſt was formed in their ſouls.*—O happy meeting! what glad and mutual rejoicings! O happy relation, which neither death nor the grave have been able to diſſolve!—Once you went up with joy to the houſe of the LORD, and *took ſweet counſel together*; now you go to preſent yourſelves together in a nobler temple. While on earth, your joint prayers went up to the throne of mercy; henceforth your eternal praiſes ſhall be joined in heaven around the throne of glory. There you ſhall be fellow-gueſts at

[a] Gal. iv. 15.

at the table of the LAMB; and whitherſo-ever he goeth, you ſhall follow him.

Happy they who thus obeyed the goſpel, and in the reſpective ſtations and relations of life had the teſtimony of their own hearts that they pleaſed GOD. And ſee! what numbers of ſuch happy ones are there!—There are the Rulers who ruled well, being a terror unto evil-doers, and a praiſe unto them who did well: and there are they who honoured and obeyed them, having ſubmitted themſelves peaceably to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake.—There are the poor who were rich in grace, and lived in contented thankful-neſs, now made heirs of that kingdom which could not be purchaſed with gold or with ſilver. And behold alſo the *rich*, who were not more ſo in means than in *good works* and in good example, now rich indeed in a treaſure which neither moth nor ruſt can corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and ſteal.—See every hair in the hoary head which was found in the ways of righteouſneſs, now making

a ray in that diadem which is truly a crown of glory [a]. And ſee the virtuous young, with ſuch a youth now beſtowed on them as neither death nor old age can ever rob them of. Such infirmities and foes as theſe, they have left behind them in the grave, and to the New Jeruſalem they can never follow them: for, there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor pain *there*. There Iſaac ſhall not be blind, Jacob lame, Anna weak, or Simeon feeble. No, not even the ſhadow of any weakneſs or defect is to be found among theſe happy myriads.—See, among them, thoſe matrons who were pious and devout; and thoſe virgins whoſe robes of innocence, like theſe which they now wear, were unſpotted and fair.—And ſee there too, thoſe babes that ſcarce ever ſaw the light, now reſtored to a life in which *there ſhall no more be an infant of days* [b]. Mark how vaſt the number of theſe little ones: in how great a meaſure is the kingdom of GOD made up of ſuch!—Obſerve eſpecially that com-

[a] Prov. xvi. 31. [b] Job iii. 16. with Iſ. lxv. 20.

company of them, which ſhines with a glory ſo ſuperior to all the reſt.—Why, Rachel, didſt thou weep for thy children, and wouldſt not be comforted, becauſe they were not?—Why, ye mothers of Bethlehem, was your voice heard in Rama, with lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning[a]? Why did you not *comfort one another* with the hopes of finding your children on this day *here*, where Herod does not reign, and where his malice does not reach?—And why, ye Chriſtian parents, were you ſo much caſt down, when you laid your dear little ones in the duſt, and mourned for them as loſt *when God took them?* Behold, now, not one of them is amiſſing. *God calls, and they anſwer*[b]: *the indignation is paſt*, and they come forth from their ſecret chambers.—They come forth: for *lo! the winter is paſt, the rain is over and gone; the time of the ſinging of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land*:—yea, the voice of their Beloved hath knocked at the door of their reſt,

[a] Mat. ii. 18. [b] Job xiv. 15.

ſaying to each, *Ariſe, my love, my fair one and come away.*—They hear *his voice,* and reply, It *is ſweet ;* they ſee *his countenance,* and ſay, It *is comely*[a]. They follow him *like the roe or the young hart upon the mountains of Bether ; and their ſouls are like the chariots of Aminadab,* bounding for joy.—

I ſee you, who were their pious earthly parents, now bluſh for having had ſo little faith. I ſee the tranſports of your joy on receiving them: the ecſtaſy of your gladneſs on finding your ſons, who were dead, now alive; your children, who were loſt, now found[b].—I ſee—but theſe are things unutterable:—no language, no conception can be true to them.—Happy children! happy parents! both found in JESUS:—henceforth who ſhall ſeparate you!

Equally vain would be the attempt to deſcribe the happy meeting of other pious relatives on this occaſion. When two perſons that were once united by the neareſt relation, or by the tendereſt ties of affection, ſo that like ſoul and body they made

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[a] Song ii. [b] Luke xv. 32.

but one;—when theſe meet, and mingle hearts and ſouls again in thoſe bliſsful abodes where death can tear them aſunder no more;—who can poſſibly conceive the vaſt acceſſion which this circumſtance will give to their felicity!—When Jacob meets here his beloved Rachel, and David finds his friend Jonathan; when you find the delight of your ſoul, and I the darling of mine; let thoſe who have felt the power of the pureſt friendſhip and love, imagine, if they can, how great muſt be the happineſs.—Why did not pious friends, amidſt the pangs of ſeparation, look more ſteadily to this day, and rejoice in the proſpect of a ſecond and eternal union? Why did they not remember, That the friendſhip founded on virtue could never periſh?

As there are perſons here of all ages and relations, ſo are there of all offices and profeſſions; *from the king that ſat on the throne, to the ſlave that was grinding at the mill:* for, GOD hath no more reſpect to offices than to perſons, nor to perſons than to nations. He that feared GOD and wrought

righteouſneſs, whatever he was, is now accepted. What ſtation any one held in the great family, or what occupation was allotted to him in his Maſter's vineyard, is not the inquiry on this day; but whether he filled that ſtation well, and was faithful in the work which was intruſted to him by his LORD. If a man is found to have diſcharged his duty well, it is of little moment whether he did it in a purple robe, or in a rough garment; in the field, or in the temple.—As evidence of this, mark where ſtands the pious and humane Centurion[a], who had the courage to be religious and devout, amidſt the peculiar temptations of a military life, and in depite of

—"The world's dread laugh,
Which ſcarce the firm philoſopher could ſcorn."

——And mark that other, (almoſt concealed in too much light!) the ſame with the good Centurion in character as well as in occupation. As faithful to his GOD as he was to his king, and as dear to thoſe below as he was to the few above him, he ſpent his life

[a] Luke vii. 5.

life in multiplying occaſions of felicity.—
Pious and benevolent follower of the LAMB;
friend to human kind, and foe to none!
thy happineſs, on this day, forms one portion of my heaven. If only *a cup of cold water given to a diſciple* is now remembered, ſurely the bread which thou didſt give to a diſciple cannot be forgotten. No; overagainſt thy name it ſtands in that book of remembrance which GOD hath written.—
In my mortal page it was vain to record thy name. The relic was too ſacred to be truſted to ſo frail a vehicle. Enough that it was ſet down in the LAMB's book of life, where only it ſhall never be loſt or *forgotten* *.

It was ſaid of old, that not many rich,

not

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* Alluding to the following epitaph.

Hic poſitum eſt,
Quod reſtat
I. A. O.
Qui, dum vixit,
Multos amicos, nullos inimicos
Sibi acquiſivit.
Nunc mortuus,
Cito *obliviſcetur.*

not many noble, were called. But ſee one, who holds as diſtinguiſhed a rank in the ſecond life as he did in the firſt. It is one whom no greatneſs could intoxicate, whom no vice could taint, nor pleaſure lure. In a licentious age, and in the midſt of a debauched nobility, he ſtill maintained his integrity; and, like the ſun, diffuſed happineſs on all around him. Whilſt others allowed themſelves to be borne down the ſtream, by the tide of the times, he nobly ſtemmed the torrent, and reſolved to be pious. Lo! whole kingdoms now bear witneſs to his piety, whilſt the Judge, with an immortal crown, rewards him. And now, as never before, doth this great perſon feel his glory. The *man* is now indeed a *King*.

§ 2. We might inſtance a thouſand other ſorts of that rich variety which makes up the tribes of the bleſſed, and ſtill the ten thouſandth part ſhould not be told. See, among them, thoſe in whoſe lives appeared the fruits of the ſanctifying ſpirit; love,

joy,

joy, peace, long ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance, and the like virtues [a]. Among them are all the elect of GOD, of whatever country or denomination, who had put on the new man, which, after GOD, is created in righteouſneſs and holineſs, with bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, forbearance and forgiveneſs [b].—See how many thouſands are among them of humble Chriſtians and weak believers, who ſcarce ever dared to hope that they ſhould ſtand where they now are; and who ſtill ſeem to be loſt in admiration of that free mercy and grace of which they are made the glorious trophies. They wonder what GOD had ſeen in ſuch ſinners as they were, that he ſhould thus bring them to his banquetting houſe, and that his banner over them ſhould be love [c]. The thought of every aſtoniſhed heart is, "Why ſuch love eſpecially to me!"—Even ſo it ſeemeth good unto thee, O Father, who wilt have mercy on

[a] Gal. v. 22, 23. [b] Col. iii. 12. & Gal. iv. 24.
[c] Song ii. 4.

on whom thou wilt have mercy! Nor men nor angels can give any other reaſon! —*Bleſſed are they who humbled themſelves, for they are now exalted.*

And if there are thouſands of timorous ſouls here, happy beyond their own humble hopes, there are ten thouſands (ſuch was the charity of the world!) happy beyond the belief of all others. But it appears, that the world ſaw, or would ſee, only one half, and that not the faireſt, of their character. *Thou, O God, judgeſt not with man's judgment!*

But mark! a greater wonder than either of theſe. Behold, there ſtand ſome, who once, in well-meant, though miſtaken zeal, barred the gates of heaven upon each other; and placed as it were a *flaming ſword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life*, and to forbid each other acceſs to paradiſe.—And all this for differences which, as appears now, were not eſſential; for differences which related only to the ceremonial, but did not touch the vital part of religion. See how they are now filled with mutual joy and wonder at meeting there! See how they

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are happy beyond meaſure, at finding that GOD had infinitely more charity for both, than either of themſelves had for the other!—And open, open wide, O my ſoul, thy capacity of love to GOD, as well as the bowels of thy charity to men: for, behold there, many whom thou didſt often warn; and for whom thou didſt ſtill oftener pray, and ſigh, and tremble; and of whoſe ſalvation thou didſt almoſt at length deſpair. But it appears that GOD, though after thine eye was ſealed, did grant them repentance unto life: it appears that the graces of the Spirit were ſhed abroad in their hearts; that they were *born again*, and became *new men*[a]; and that JESUS was made unto them *wiſdom*, *righteouſneſs*, *ſanctification*, and *redemption*.—With what new ſong ſhall we praiſe thee for this, O Almighty and All-gracious REDEEMER!—O that we knew the ſong which high Archangels ſing!—But it would not anſwer our purpoſe. No; holy and exalted ſpirits! you are happy;—but you know not what it

[a] John iii. 3. & 2 Cor. v. 17.

it is *to be redeemed*.—Yet our joy by ſympathy is yours, ye elder brethren of the Archangelic band! Join us, then; and join us, all ye other angels, with all your faculties and all your flame, while we ſing a new and yet unknown ſong *to Him who loved us, and waſhed us in his own blood, and made us kings and prieſts to God for ever!*

Obſerve alſo, there, thoſe more eminent Chriſtians, whoſe ſtrong and lively faith grew up to that *aſſurance*, to which *ſtrangers*, who *intermeddled not in their joy*, gave the name of preſumption. It now appears that they well *knew in whom they believed*[a]. Yet they ſeem to be no leſs aſtoniſhed than their brethren who were more diffident. They ſeem to confeſs, that if they had conceived the ten thouſandth part of that weight of glory which is now revealed and given them, their aſſurance, at its very height, had failed them. So unworthy, notwithſtanding all their endeavours, and ſo unmeet, notwithſtanding all their graces, they muſt have judged themſelves for the very

[a] 2 Tim. i. 12.

very loweſt place at the feet of the ſaints in Paradiſe.—And tho' they ſtill remember, what formerly they never once loſt ſight of, that the reward is *not of works but of grace*; yet ſo vaſt is that reward, and ſo high beyond their thoughts and expectations, or any thing that was ever *ſeen, or heard, or conceived by man*, that their only words ſeem to be, "AMAZING AND ALMIGHTY GRACE! UNSPEAKABLE AND UNPARALLELED MERCY!"

Amazing and almighty, indeed, was that grace, that could gather together ſo many thouſands from ſuch different ages and nations, and unite them in one faith, perſuade them to truſt in the ſame REDEEMER, and to open their arms to embrace the ſame ſalvation.—Amazing and almighty was that grace, that could unite under the ſame banner, Jews and Chriſtians, Greeks and Barbarians, bond and free, rich and poor, wiſe and fooliſh, learned and ignorant; and make them all, however various their diſpoſitions in other reſpects, reliſh the ſame truths, rejoice in the ſame goſpel,

delight

delight in the ſame holineſs! Who would have thought to ſee *there* ſo many of the Jews; and *ſuch a multitude as no man can number*, of the once idolatrous Gentiles:—ſo many Barbarians from the moſt unexpected places; and ſo many philoſophers, princes, and great men; though *not many wiſe, not many noble, not many mighty are called!* Yet all theſe were taught and conſtrained by Grace to renounce their pride, their prejudices, and their vices; to renounce, after they had done every thing they could, all confidence in themſelves; and to glory only in the croſs of CHRIST, and in being the humble followers of JESUS of Nazareth. Yes; all theſe were taught by grace to deny themſelves, take up their croſs, reſt their whole hope of conqueſt on the blood of the LAMB [a]; and expect ſalvation only through his vicarious atonement and imputed righteouſneſs [b].

How all-ſufficient that atonement, that could expiate the guilt of ſo many myriads! and that righteouſneſs that could clothe them

[a] Rev. xii. 11. [b] Iſ. liii. 5. Rom. iv. 25. & iii. 21, &c.

them all in thoſe white robes in which they now appear in glory! How efficacious that blood, that could waſh off all the ſtains, and cleanſe away all the ſins, of ſuch a multitude! And how powerful that interceſſion, that could obtain peace for them, and reconcile them to a Holy God! What fulneſs of heavenly treaſures dwelt in him [a], who could beſtow on each of theſe ſo many graces, and impart to each a ſpiritual life and a new nature!—who could make the ſenſual holy, the wrathful meek, the worldly heavenly-minded, the timid bold, the woman and the child heroic!—Amazing and almighty, indeed, is the power of that Grace, that could thus make the child of hell an heir of heaven, the polluted ſoul ſuch an angel of light, and the once vile clod of earth a bright luminary among the *morning-ſtars* of creation! O the unſearchable riches and power of that Grace that could bring all theſe to glory, through ſo much oppoſition from outward as well as inward enemies!—of

[a] Col. ii. 19.

that Grace that could ſubdue death and hell, pull the lamb out of the mouth of the infernal lion and bear, deliver in the midſt of flames, and ſave in the floods of waters!—that could make all the ſtrong powers of hell relinquiſh their prey, and at laſt make Death and the Grave deliver up their priſoners!—He only could do this, whoſe name is WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, the MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the PRINCE OF PEACE!—The zeal of the LORD GOD of Hoſts alone could perform this [a]; and by his Almighty *grace* alone all theſe *are ſaved*, according to his abundant mercy [b].

Unſpeakable and unparalleled, indeed, is that mercy which procured ſuch a ſalvation, for ſuch perſons, and by ſuch means.—That a juſt and a holy GOD ſhould not only grant peace, pardon, and reconciliation, to ſinners; but provide for them an infinite and eternal weight of glory, an equality with unſinning angels, a communion and fellowſhip with all holy beings, and

[a] Iſa. ix. 6, 7. [b] Eph. ii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 3.

and a myſterious union with himſelf:—That he ſhould do this, not for angels, but for creatures *dwelling in houſes of clay*, and liable to be *cruſhed before the moth*[a]; not for friends or even penitents, but for perverſe and obſtinate enemies:—And that he ſhould do it at ſo inconceivably vaſt an expence as the ſacrifice of his own Son:—All this is mercy too aſtoniſhing for either man or angel ever to comprehend.

That the eternal Son of GOD, who ſits upon that throne, ſhould empty himſelf of all his glory, aſſume the nature of man in its loweſt form, endure the contradiction of ſinners, the malice of devils, the wrath of GOD; and, as the proxy of a guilty world, pour out his ſoul on the croſs like a vile ſlave and malefactor:—That, with a *love ſtronger than death*, he ſhould deſcend to the horrors of the grave; and, after his aſcenſion to his native heaven, inceſſantly plead for ſinners that had ſo treated him, and ſend down to them his Spirit, under the ſpecial character of *the Comforter*:—That this Holy Spirit, after ſo

[a] Job iv. 19.

many thouſand repulſes, ſhould ſo many thouſand times return to ſtrive with them, and unweariedly apply to their ſouls that ſalvation which was purchaſed ſo dearly, yet freely offered to all *without money and without price*:—That with ſuch patience and love, he ſhould guide them in their doubts, enlighten them in their darkneſs, aid them in their trials, comfort them in their troubles, transform their ſouls to the image of the Holy JESUS, and make them meet for being partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light:—Theſe, theſe are expreſſions of the Divine Mercy, equally inconceivable and unutterable!

In a word, that GOD the Father ſhould not only accept, but even provide for them a ranſom; and that this ranſom ſhould be no leſs than his only, eternal, and beloved SON:—That the SON, by ſuch a courſe of active and paſſive obedience, ſhould work out for them ſuch a ſalvation:—And that the SPIRIT, againſt ſo much oppoſition, ſhould ſanctify them freely by the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS, and watch

ſo

ſo carefully over the little ſpark in the *ſmoking flax*, till he had fanned it to a flame, and made it victorious over every thing that counteracted its influence:—That this vaſt expence, and a thouſand times more, ſhould be laid out on the ſalvation of every ſingle one of the happy myriads that are there;—this is ſuch amazing mercy and grace, as all the univerſe muſt ever admire and adore, but can never, never comprehend! Angels are raviſhed with what this day unfolds of the ſtupendous *myſtery*, and ſtill deſire, with joy and wonder ever new, *to look in to it*. But the thoughts of Archangels, as well as of the Redeemed, are overwhelmed and loſt, when they would meaſure, even in imagination, the height or depth, the length or breadth, of this PROFOUND OF LOVE.—We will not, O GOD, attempt to meaſure it; we will only ſtrive to praiſe and to adore it; and for no other end do we wiſh for the faculty of the Cherub, or the Seraph's tongue. —We will praiſe it; otherwiſe, even in heaven, we ſhould be unhappy. Without

this employment, and the pleaſing ſenſations of love and gratitude from which it ſprings, all the glory of heaven to us would be dim, and *the ſun in the midſt of the city* dark; the ſociety of the bleſſed could give no delight, and the fruit of the tree of life could have no reliſh; the ſtreams of Paradiſe could not refreſh us, nor could the harps of Angels charm us; our joy, even around the throne of GOD, would be inſipid and dead, and our eternal life would be an intolerable burden.—All the myriads of the ranſomed, therefore, will praiſe the Divine Mercy, and call upon all the orders of Angels to join them, in aſcribing unceaſing praiſe to the FATHER who contrived, to the SON who executed, and to the SPIRIT who applied, the ſcheme of ſalvation.—For this, O bleſſed and gracious TRINITY! *praiſe waits for thee in Zion*, loud as all the chorus of men and angels can ſing, and long as all the revolutions of Eternity ſhall continue! But even this acknowledgment is too poor, and this duration too ſhort, to celebrate

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the praiſes of thy mercy and grace, and the wonders of thy redeeming love!

§ 3. THE vaſt variety of the ſaved, together with the vaſt expence both of power and of mercy which appears, in the courſe of *this day*, to have been laid out, with a rich and unlimited variety, on the ſalvation of each of them, makes it truly deſerve the the name of *That day on which Chriſt ſhould come to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believed*[a]. When the ſaints behold the amazing ſalvation that was wrought for them, and look back from their eternal haven, on all the variegated ſcenes of time, and on the tempeſtuous ocean through which they were ſafely ſteered:—When they clearly ſee all the dangers with which they were ſurrounded; the vaſt number, ſtrength, and malice of their outward and inward enemies; the thouſand times they brought themſelves, by ſecurity or preſumption, within an hair-breadth of falling a prey to them; and the thouſand thouſand

[a] 2 Theſſ. i. 10.

daily interpositions of the Divine Providence and Grace to deliver their souls *from the snare of the fowler*, by preventing, aiding, and rescuing them, and by making all events, adverse and prosperous, and even the very machinations of their enemies, conspire to promote their everlasting welfare:— When they behold this astonishing sight, how must they admire and adore the Great Author and Finisher of their salvation!— When they look back on all the iniquity of their hearts and lives, on the pollutions that took such hold of their souls, and on the seeds of frailty and decay that were planted in their bodies, and see how perfectly they are now delivered both from the one and from the other;—when they find their souls purified and their bodies glorified, so that they shall have no more sorrow nor sin to make any of them cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me*[a]*!* nor any pain to make a single inhabitant of heaven say, *I am sick!*—shall not this amazing change excite the highest ad-

[a] Rom. vii. 24.

admiration of the power and grace of that SAVIOUR who wrought it, and whoſe glory appears ſo conſpicuous in every individual among the ſaved?—Whatever was done for them, it was in conſequence of ſome or other of his manifold offices; and to the manifold REDEEMER is now aſcribed all the glory. Were they taught the ſaving knowledge of GOD and CHRIST, ſo as to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly righteouſly and godly in the world?—they were ſo taught by his word, Spirit, and example. Were their ſins expiated?—he was the Sacrifice. Were their perſons reconciled to GOD, and accepted by him?—he was the Interceſſor. Were their hearts captivated and ſubdued, and all their enemies vanquiſhed?—by no power nor might of their own was this done; it was by the grace of GOD in CHRIST that they were brought to the obedience of the goſpel, and it was through the Captain of their ſalvation that they were made more than conquerors. All the excellencies of the ſaints are, therefore,

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no more than reflexions of his glory, like thoſe of the ſun from the mirrour which itſelf enlightens.

Accordingly, in all of them, and by all of them, he is admired; whilſt each, a wonder to himſelf, admires ſome peculiar operation of grace, ſome aſtoniſhing difference in his own ſalvation.—One admires, like Levi, the power of that grace which in an inſtant looſed all the ties that faſtened his groveling ſoul to earth, and fixed his love on heaven.—Another adores that grace of GOD which appeared to him in the midſt of his guilt; taught him to deny his worldly luſts, and to part with his ſins, though dear to him as his right hand or eye. A third is charmed with that mercy which came to *find him before he ſought it*; and which taught his profane tongue, inſtead of oaths and curſes, to delight in prayer and praiſes. A fourth is raviſhed with that love of the Spirit, which was ſhed abroad in his heart, and which irreſiſtibly ſubdued every thought of covetouſneſs, envy, malice and wrath, to the obe-

dience

dience of CHRIST. *Here*, one is amazed, like Nicodemus, at the grace that condescended to instruct him in saving knowledge, when wofully ignorant in spiritual matters; at the grace that overcame his pride and prejudices, when he was only a disciple by night, and ashamed of JESUS: And *there*, another, like the prophet of Nineveh, stands confounded at that mercy which pursued him when he fled from it, and which as it were compelled him to accept of salvation: Whilst ALL *love* unspeakably *much*, *because so much was forgiven them*. With a grateful and overwhelming astonishment, they all breathe out, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we might be made, by a* second birth and new relation, *the sons of God!*

Nor does the glory of CHRIST, or the richness of his grace, appear less manifest in the variety of the seasons, and the variety of the means and manner, of his conferring it. Behold some, like Timothy, Samuel, and Josiah, confess, to the glory of his free grace, that it took possession of

their

their reins before they could ſo much as invite it, and taught even their firſt liſping accents how to praiſe: Others, like the prodigal, ſtand amazed at that mercy, which, after they had a thouſand times forfeited its regard by all the wild extravagance of youth, ſtill purſued them, with a ſeries of miraculous providences, till at length it conſtrained them, even in that dangerous and infatuating ſeaſon, to forſake the empty *huſks* of ſinful pleaſure, and return to the paths of forſaken innocence, and to the happineſs of their Father's home. Some, like Martha, bleſs that grace which taught them to mind *the one thing needful*, in thoſe riper years in which the cares of the world and the concerns of their families had taken ſuch hold of their hearts as to engroſs their whole attention: Whilſt others, tho', alas! a fewer number, adore, with unſpeakable ſurpriſe, that ſovereign and omnipotent free Grace, which, after all their waſte of life, laid hold of them even in their old age, and *commanded*

[a] Compare Luke x. 40, with John 11. 20—27.

commanded their dry bones to live by a kind of *first resurrection*, after they had been as *dead* in nature as they had been *in trespasses and sin*. Themselves and others looked when these *cumberers of the ground* (which stood in the vineyard of GOD, not only for three, but for three-score years, without bearing any fruit) should be *cut down and cast into the fire* [b]; when, O miracle of grace! which eternity is too short to celebrate, their dry and withered branches revived with spiritual life, flourished with all the greenness and vigour of youth [b], and brought forth *fruit meet for repentance* and for glory.—*This is thy doing, O Lord; and it is wonderful in our eyes* [c]!

In a word, among all the blessed, not one is to be seen who does not magnify the freedom and sovereignty of the grace of GOD, and ascribe to him alone all the glory of his salvation, in whatever manner

[a] Luke xiii. 6. [b] Ps. xcii. 14.

[c] For a fuller illustration of some of these important subjects, see WATTS's *World to come*, Serm. IV. and DODDRIGE *on Regeneration*, Serm. VIII.

ner it was brought about and ſecured. If one, like the goſpel-merchant, found this *pearl of great price*, after a long and painful ſearch; or if another, like the huſbandman, alighted on this *treaſure* accidentally in the field, neither the one nor the other attributes to himſelf any ſhare of the merit, but aſcribes it all to HIM by whom their ſteps were guided and their endeavours made to proſper. Even thoſe ſons of GOD whoſe obedience was the moſt early and the moſt conſtant, and who at *any time tranſgreſſed the leaſt* the commandment of their Father, bow their heads before the throne as low as others, and confeſs that *by grace only they are ſaved*. Nay, when they ſee now ſo clearly who it was that made them to differ; whoſe grace it was that helped them in any good thing they did, and reſtrained them in any evil thing they forbore: When they ſee how many thouſand times they had been nigh to falling, and had utterly periſhed if that grace, which did once lay hold of their ſouls, had not ſtill upheld them, notwithſtanding

[a] Mat. 13. 44—46.

ſtanding their many and aggravated provocations: When they ſee how much was done for them, and how little was done by them, the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love of GOD, and the poorneſs and diſproportionableneſs of their returns:—When they ſee all this, they are among the foremoſt to call upon their ſouls, and all that is within them, to bleſs the LORD, and to join in that ſong of all the children of grace, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be all the glory.*

§ 4. BUT to proceed in our contemplation.—Obſerve further how this glory of the grace of GOD ſhines ſtill brighter from the light which this day caſts on the wonderful *means and manner* of every ſaint's converſion, in which there appears the ſame unlimited variety with what we have juſt now ſeen in the ſeaſon of conferring it. Some, like Cornelius, were moſt remarkably viſited with the ſalvation of

JESUS,

JESUS, while they were engaged in the exercise of prayer. Others had their hearts opened, as Lydia, by the *foolishness of preaching* [a]. Some were drawn by the *cords of love*; like good Jehoshaphat, whose heart was lifted up, even by prosperity, to walk in the ways of the LORD [b]. Others could not be reclaimed from their wanderings, nor driven back to GOD, but by the rod of correction, or some sore affliction: Such was Manasseh, who *would not hearken to the Lord, nor know that he was God*, till the thorns seized him, and the fetters in the dungeon galled him [c]. Some souls, like Job's, needed only *the candle of the Lord to shine upon their tabernacle*, to make them eschew evil and be perfect; whilst others, like Jonah, must have been tossed by the storms of adversity, and almost swallowed by its roaring billows, before they could be roused from the lethargy of sin, to call upon the name of their GOD, and earnestly implore his favour. A single word

[a] Acts x. 3. & xvi. 14. [b] 2 Chron. xvii. 6.
[c] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—13.

word ſpoken in ſeaſon, was frequently bleſſed, as the occaſion of good to ſome; and a ſingle ſacred ſentence, like a ſharp arrow from the armoury of GOD, was made to ſtick faſt in the ſouls of others, and to give the mortal wound to their love to the world and its ſinful pleaſures.—Some, like Paul, were arreſted by a viſible miracle, and *pluckt like brands out of the burning*, after the flames of hell had as it were already taken hold of them. Others, by the inviſible hand of GOD, had their minds unaccountably impreſſed; and, they knew not why nor how, changed. And to ſome, ſleep itſelf was made the mean of ſalvation, and the miniſter of inſtruction; and the grace of GOD was conveyed to their ſouls, even in their *ſlumberings upon their bed*, and in their *dreams in the night-ſeaſon*[a].

To this we may add, that even the ordinary and ſtanding means, by which GOD communicated his grace to moſt, wanted nothing but their being leſs common to be equally wonderful.—That the

[a] Job xxxiii. 15, 16.

little leaven ſhould gradually ſpread itſelf through the whole maſs, and aſſimilate its nature to its own, or that the ſmall ſeed-ling ſhould grow into a large tree, could be owing to nothing but the conſtant influence of the Divine Spirit, accompliſhing his purpoſes not by a ſingle operation, but by a long ſeries of miracles. What though the appointed means were uſed, as they always ought to be, with a religious exactneſs? yet of themſelves they could not produce the deſired effect, either in ſpiritual or in natural affairs. It is to GOD alone, and to the kind influence of his providence and grace, that both the Huſbandman and the Chriſtian were indebted for efficacy to thoſe means, and for a bleſſing and ſucceſs to all their endeavours. Although Paul did plant and Apollos water, it was GOD alone who gave the increaſe.—Wonderful art thou, O LORD, in counſel, and excellent in working!

After having ſeen that the Spirit, like the wind, blew where, and when, and by what means, it liſted, uſing a free and ſo-

vereign

vereign variety in the choice of perſons, times, and means, that no living might deſpair of His influence, nor truſt to any devices or endeavours of his own without it, we may further remark, that the freeneſs of the Divine grace is equally manifeſt in *the manner* in which it operated on the ſouls of men. Till the light of this day aroſe, the manner of theſe operations lay for the moſt part beyond the reach of all human ken. In appearance they were different, though their effects upon the life and converſation were the ſame.—Some, like the Jailor, were filled with *trembling and aſtoniſhment;* felt all the terrors of hell and Sinai ruſhing in upon their ſouls, and, like *the arrows of God, drinking up their ſpirits.* In this ſituation, on the very borders of deſpair, and as it were *out of the pit* itſelf, they *cried,* in agonies inconceivable to others, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* even when they thought that ſalvation to them was almoſt impoſſible.—Some melted into floods of ſorrow at the ſaving ſight of their ſins, like him who *made his bed to ſwim in*

the night, and watered his couch with his tears [a].—Others, like Magdalene, were powerfully captivated by the love of CHRIST, and ſweetly conſtrained by the riches of his grace, to bow their ſouls at his feet, and to pour out their whole heart in gratitude, becauſe he viſited them with his free ſalvation [b].—And in many, the ſpiritual, like the natural life, or like the *good ſeed*, by gradual and imperceptible degrees, advanced in holineſs, and grew up to a maturity and meetneſs for glory.

In all theſe *diverſities of operations* [c], ſeen darkly as through a glaſs till now, all ſee and own that it was *the ſame God who wrought all in all*, for the ſake of his SON, and by the free grace of his Spirit. Accordingly, among all the myriads of the ſaved, not a ſingle ſaint aſcribes to himſelf a ſingle jot of the work of his ſalvation. They all aſcribe it wholly *to Him who loved them and waſhed them in his own blood*. Yea, they who in return loved him *even unto the death*, and who ſhed their blood

[a] Pſ. vi. 6. [b] Luke vii. 36—38. [c] 1 Cor. xii. 6.

blood for him to the laſt drop, never once name this by way of merit here. The return, although it was all that they could render, was ſo poor, and mixed with ſo much weakneſs and alloy, that they could not, without ſhame, remember it. Nay, ſee how the Cherubim and Seraphim themſelves *throw down their crowns at the foot of the throne;* thereby acknowledging that it is by grace they hold them. And yet one would think theſe ſons of GOD, theſe exalted ſpirits, as *catholic and infallible* as any mitred mortal who ever laid claim to ſupererogation. But I hear none, on this day, inſiſt on ſo abſurd a tenet: Nor is there any ſo weak as to believe it any longer; for now *the eyes of all are opened, to know* truth from falſhood, *good from evil*[a]. —Preſumptuous and ſacrilegious above compariſon was the thought! to attempt to rob thee, O GOD, of thy glory; that incommunicable treaſure of which thou art ſo jealous, and of which thou wilt by no means give one mite to another.

[a] Gen. iii. 5.

On this day, Pilate's great queſtion, *What is Truth*[a]*?* comes to be moſt effectually reſolved. Much diſpute there was in all ages, Which was the true church, and the true religion: every ſect, in its own opinion, being in the right; in the opinion of every other, in the wrong. Each gathered parties to help up the cry, and attempted, firſt by noiſe and talk, and then perhaps by fire and faggot, to decide the controverſy. But *God was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the ſtill ſmall voice*[b]. The poſſeſſors of the true religion are now found to have been thoſe who were meek and modeſt; thinly ſcattered indeed among the herd, and therefore liable to be over-borne and out-noiſed by the multitude. Thoſe who ſhowed their religion by being mild, and peaceable, and charitable, and pious; who did not diſpute, but live; who were not puffed up with notions, but filled with love to GOD, and univerſal charity to mankind: —Theſe are the perſons who are now declared

[a] John xviii. 38. [b] 1 Kings xix. 12.

clared the rightful heirs of the kingdom; whilſt thoſe proud and preſumptuous expectants, who hugged themſelves as the only favourites of heaven, merely on account of their having been of this or that party, and who warmed their hands at thoſe fires which their own fancy kindled, are now diſmiſſed with the ſelf-righteous Phariſee, and placed at an awful diſtance [a].—*Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the* new earth.—*Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the* new heaven. And *bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*—Without the inward *power of godlineſs*, uſeleſs as the empty huſk were all its outward *forms*.

§ 5. SUCH is the light which the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſheds, this day, on the œconomy of grace. Let us next turn our eye on the no leſs lucid beams which it caſts on the diſpenſations of Providence; whoſe ways, till now, were

" —dark and intricate
By human underſtanding trac'd in vain."

[a] Iſa. l. 11.

But this day diſperſes all the *clouds and darkneſs* that were *about the throne of God*; and ſhows, to the ſatisfaction of the univerſe, that juſtice and judgment were, always, its habitation. The judgments of GOD were indeed *a great deep*; and the myſtery of Providence appeared often to our view, dark as the hour of midnight, and crooked as the path of the deſart. We ſaw folly frequently ſucceeding, and commanding reſpect; whilſt wiſdom was diſappointed and deſpiſed. We ſaw clouds encompaſſing the devout, while the ſun ſhone upon the man that *did not ſacrifice* [a]. Providence, on thoſe accounts, was arraigned. GOD was thought to have *owned*, what, for then unknown reaſons, he only *permitted*; and to have *acted* that which, in judgment, he only *allowed*. The ſucceſs of an action was ſuppoſed to vouch for the goodneſs of the cauſe; whilſt the beſt deſigns were thought wicked when they proved unproſperous, and the whiteſt innocence deemed black when the cloud was paſſing over it.

—Thus

[a] Eccleſ. vii. 15.

—Thus Shimei accuſed David of being a man of blood, becauſe of the evils of his houſe [a]; and his three friends concluded Job to have been as great a ſinner as he was a ſufferer [b]. The Barbarians inferred from the viper, that St Paul was a murderer [c]; and the unbelieving world judged from the croſs, that the Holy JESUS was an evil-doer.—But it now appears, that *the wheels were full of eyes* [d]; and that *all the ways of God were equal.* It now appears, why the *fire out of the bramble* was permitted to *devour the cedars of Lebanon* [e]; and why the deſert of the wicked was ſo often the lot of the righteous. For, the great Drama of Providence is now winded up. The grand plot is unravelled; and all the ſcenes of the mighty piece lie open to the view. The propriety of every detached part, and the relation of one to another, are now manifeſt; and form, all together, one uniform, beautiful, and complete WHOLE.

Thou who didſt once deſire, with a pious

and

[a] 2 Sam. xvi. 7. [b] Job iv. [c] Acts xxviii. 3, 4.
[d] Ezek. i. 18. [e] Judg. ix.

and humble modeſty, to reaſon with GOD concerning his judgments[a], and wonderedſt *why the wicked proſpered*, while the righteous were often borne down with trouble and *ſorely plagued*;

——" ſee now the cauſe,
Why unaſſuming worth in ſecret liv'd,
And died, neglected: why the good man's ſhare
In life was gall and bitterneſs of ſoul:
Why the lone widow and her orphans pin'd,
In ſtarving ſolitude; while luxury,
In palaces, lay ſtraining her low thought,
To form unreal wants."

See how this day clears up the myſtery, and ceaſe to wonder. For, Virtue now lifts up her head to meet her crown; and Wickedneſs ſinks down in thoſe flames which ſhe laboured to kindle. If the rod of the wicked, at any time, reſted on the back of the righteous, (which, however, was not the caſe ſo often as we ſhort-ſighted creatures, who frequently miſtook mens real characters, imagined,) if this at any time was permitted, it now appears to have been with the gracious deſign of driving

[a] Jer. xii. 1.

driving the ſtray-ſheep home to the fold of ſafety. And if ſome afflictive providences from the more immediate hand of GOD joined in correcting any child of his, it now appears that no leſs ſeverity could ſerve to bring him back from his dangerous wanderings on the confines of hell and deſtruction. Famine and diſtreſs from GOD, as well as inhumanity and contempt from men, muſt have been poured on the *younger ſon*, before he could be induced to *ariſe and go to his Father* [a]. And if, even after taking this ſalutary reſolution, he and many another returning prodigal trod ſometimes in a rough and thorny path, and through dark vales in which for many days they had neither light nor comfort, where had they any cauſe to complain? They were but reaping what they ſowed, and eating the fruit of their own doings. And when men ſowed to the wind, what could they expect to reap but the whirlwind?

But many laboured, it was thought, under

[a] Luke xvi.

under troubles which were not of their own procuring. Many of the poor voyagers on the ſtormy ſea of life had often their bark driven upon thoſe ſhelves and ſhallows which lay ſo frequent in their courſe; and then Providence was arraigned, as if it had ſported with their miſery. The misfortune of ſuch, it now appears, was owing, in many caſes, to their own preſumption or miſconduct; ſlumbering often in a thoughtleſs ſecurity, and either neglecting or counteracting the wiſe admonitions of their pilot. And, and at other times, it was permitted in order to give thoſe around them an opportunity of ſhowing their charity by making every effort to relieve them; as well as to teach themſelves and others, for the future, to be more vigilant and cautious.

Some, indeed, may have met with ſtorms and hurricanes in their troubled courſe, which it might be ſaid no diligence of theirs could have avoided. But here alſo the finger of GOD, though then inviſible, appears to have been active, always edu-

educing real good from ſeeming evil. For now it clearly appears, that the ſtream of temptation, which hurried them along, was ſo powerful, that no ſtorm leſs violent than what they met with, could ever have forced them, againſt its current, to this haven of ſalvation. The love of ſome to the world was ſo immoderate, that they could not be cured of it without the moſt feeling conviction of the vanity of all earthly things. Their cup of pleaſure, before they could be made to relinquiſh it, muſt have been daſhed with ſo many unpalatable ingredients as rendered their life almoſt intolerably bitter. The pride of others could not be beaten down till they had found by experience that they *dwelt in houſes of clay*; that *their foundation was in the duſt*, and that they were *cruſhed before the moth*[a].—Some could never be taught a fellow-feeling with the infirmities and calamities of others, till they themſelves had been long trained in the ſchool of adverſity: And many could never be brought

[a] Job iv. 19.

brought to reſt upon their GOD, till every other prop to which they had leaned was entirely removed. Thouſands, who had ſaid to GOD in their eaſe and proſperity, *Depart from us, for we want not the knowledge of thy ways, ſought him* afterwards earneſtly and *early in* the day of their *affliction*. Then only their prayers became ſo loud as to be heard in heaven; ſo importunate as, in a manner, to force admittance into the preſence of GOD, and to extort from thence a bleſſing.

Thus it appears, that *God did not afflict willingly, nor grieve* cauſeleſsly, *the children of men*[a]. In mercy they were always afflicted; in faithfulneſs they were corrected. And ſurely that mercy deſerves to be for ever adored, which for a moment chaſtened the body, that the ſoul might be ſaved in the day of the LORD. Accordingly, all the children of adverſity, in whom affliction wrought the peaceable fruits of repentance, do adore it. Now they ſee why their heavenly Father *contended with them*, and they

[a] Lam. iii. 33.

they bleſs the ſkill of the wiſe Phyſician, who mixed the ingredients of their cup, and adminiſtered the ſalutary though bitter potion. Obſerve, for inſtance, the ſilent gratitude and joy with which the heart and the hand of that ſaint are lifted up, becauſe his days were not only ſo *few* but likewiſe ſo *evil*.—O Jacob! now, more clearly than when thou didſt hear that Joſeph was alive, and advanced in Egypt, thou doſt ſee how all thoſe things made *for* thee, which thou once thoughteſt to have been *againſt* thee.—Many a faint may now adopt the words of the Pſalmiſt of old, and ſay, *It is good for me that I was afflicted!*

Nor do thoſe afflictions which GOD ſent for the *trial* of his people appear to have been leſs mercifully deſigned than thoſe which he ſent for their *correction*. How great the good which patient and reſigned ſufferers did to others by their example! and what an increaſe of felicity did they procure to themſelves, ſince their glory is in proportion to their trials and ſufferings! It was through ſuffering that the Captain

of

of our ſalvation himſelf was made perfect, when he became our atonement and repreſentative; and it has been through ſome degree of ſuffering and tribulation that all his followers have attained to glory. By this they were purified as gold in the furnace, and had their garments waſhed as in floods of water. Hence *their* glory is the brighteſt whoſe trials have been the greateſt. See an inſtance in the *woman of Canaan* [a]. How happy in having been ſo ſorely afflicted in the perſon of her child! Without this trial, it is probable, ſhe never had come to JESUS; much leſs had ſhe prayed ſo earneſtly for mercy, or been qualified for obtaining ſo conſpicuous a reward. And then, what an example had the world wanted, of faith, patience, perſeverance, humility, and holy importunity! What encouragement had thouſands wanted, *always to pray, and not to faint!* Happy woman! no longer an *alien from the commonwealth of Iſrael, nor a ſtranger to the covenant of promiſe*;—thy foreſt trial hath proved thy greateſt

[a] Mat. 15. 22.

greateſt mercy!—And behold another inſtance, whom the whiteneſs of his robes ſhow to have paſſed through great tribulation [a]. With his finger he ſtill ſeems to point to that word of Holy Writ, which we heard him ſo often adopting, when almoſt overwhelmed with thoſe floods of trouble which we ſaw him paſſing through: *The ſufferings of the preſent world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed.* He ſuffered injuries; but it appears he did not, ſo much as in thought, reſent them. His laſt garment and his laſt morſel were pluckt from him by the oppreſſor; and he was driven on the world at large, to ſeek, with a trembling hand, that charity which he himſelf had ſo long and ſo liberally beſtowed on others. But no repining word was heard to eſcape him. "I know (ſaid he) that I am but travelling to my Father's home; and if I have not every accommodation in the road, yet on this I have comfort, that the journey ſhall ſoon be over. Till then, it is enough for me

[a] Rev. vii.

that thou, O GOD! hast said, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee* [a]. The universe hangs upon thy word, and well may I depend upon thy promise."—Happy soul! thou didst *sow in tears*; but now thou dost *reap in joy*, a harvest large in proportion to thy former sorrows. As for him that oppressed thee, he, alas! *in his lifetime received his good things*.—Righteous and true, O LORD, are thy judgments!

§ 6. THE unequal distribution of the means of grace and salvation, is another difficulty of which good men had long laboured to find a satisfactory solution. Behold, this *day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God* clears up this, as it does every other mystery; and they who once found fault with the administration of the GREAT GOVERNOR of the universe on this account, stand now silent and confounded, when they see the equity and impartiality of his dealings, both with regard to nations and individuals. Many

[a] Heb. xiii. 5.

of

of thoſe nations who ſat in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, had, it appears, wilfully ſhut their eyes upon the light; and others, by their abuſe of it after having long enjoyed it, provoked GOD *to remove their candleſtick out of its place*[a], and to give them up to ſpiritual blindneſs. And where neither of theſe reaſons can be alleged, it ſtill appears, from the equity of this day's proceedings, that GOD had no reſpect either of perſons or of nations. He no longer appears to have been ſuch a partial parent as he was ſuppoſed by many, who, meaſuring him by their own narrow and contracted ſouls, imagined his regard was wholly confined to this or that pitiful ſect or party. No; to the Father of all ſpirits, all ſpirits ſtood equally related as creatures, and had a claim on his juſtice for an impartial judgment. The many advantages and means of grace which one nation or individual enjoyed above another that was not chargeable with the abuſe or neglect of theſe means, appear now to have

[a] Rev. ii. 5.

been no ſuch inequalities in the Divine adminiſtration as men once thought them. For all theſe circumſtances, with others ariſing from the difference of education, the difference of the place or age which men lived in, with ſuch other things, are carefully conſidered now, when the accounts are balanced. Proper allowances are made where favourable circumſtances were denied, and a proportionable improvement is looked for where they were granted. *To whomſoever much was given, of them the more is required* [a]. This rule places mankind more upon an equality than we were often willing to allow; nay, it frequently diſcovers the advantage to lie on that ſide on which we leaſt expected to find it. Hence it is, on this day, more tolerable for Nineveh than for Jeruſalem; for Sodom than for Capernaum; and, would to God we had not reaſon to add, for many other leſs favoured countries than for Britain! But the truth of that which was told by the Judge himſelf in the

[a] Luke xii. 48.

the days of his flesh is now manifest: *Many who were first* in means and opportunities, *are last* in reward, because they were so in improvement [a].

Those who had enjoyed the greatest advantages, but neglected to make the proper use of them, have now no cause to glory. To have been *of the seed of Abraham*, or of the *children of the kingdom*, professed members of the Jewish or of the Christian church, cannot, without holiness, give any one a title to stand at the right-hand of JESUS. Much less is this privilege confined to those only who were members of one or other of these communities, and who duly improved that favour. The fruits of the SAVIOUR's death and sufferings were of a far more extensive nature. No age, no country, was excluded from a share in them. Look round, and see how gloriously the ancient promise is now fulfilled; how many of *all the nations of the earth* are blessed in the SAVIOUR [b]! in that SAVIOUR whom thousands of them had

[a] Mat. xix. 30. [b] Gen. xxii. 18.

never, till this day, either ſeen or heard of. Yet the ſincerity with which they improved their opportunities and talents, ſuch as they were, procured them an intereſt in his atonement and mediation, without their ever knowing it till they were happily ſurpriſed with a flood of glory, and with ſuch a tide of joy, as would have cruſhed weak mortality to pieces, had it been allowed to ruſh in upon their ſouls while they had their abode in tabernacles of clay. If any one is found to have been ſincere and diligent, according to his opportunity, whether he was African or European, of this or that complexion or denomination, is but like the very duſt in the balance. It is indeed of no account at all in the ſight of GOD, *whoſe thoughts are not as our thoughts;* and therefore by far the greater number of the elect ſeems to have been gathered from ages, nations, and countries, the moſt unlikely, in our opinion, to have produced them. In more than one ſenſe, *the children of the deſolate* ſeem to bear a higher proportion than we

ever

ever imagined to *the children of the married wife*. If there are *an hundred and forty-four thousand sealed of all the tribes of the children of Israel*, there is *a great multitude, which no man can number, of* ALL *other nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands* [a]. Behold thousands of them gathered from those first dark ages, which passed before either the law dawned, or the brighter day-spring of the gospel rose; down from Abel, I trust I may say from Adam, to him who kept the sheep of the priest of Midian. And behold thousands from those remote corners, which were scarce ever visited by any ray of light from either the Mosaic or Evangelic dispensation. Thus ran the promise to the church of old: *I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth* [b].

[a] Rev. vii. 4, 9. [b] Is. xliii. 5, 6.

Now this promiſe is ultimately and glorioufly fulfilled. From the eaſt and from the weſt, from the north and from the ſouth, the angels have gathered theſe ſons of GOD, their younger brethren, in ſhining troops, large enough to recruit all the breaches in the heavenly hierarchies; and have placed them yonder where they ſtand, under the banner of their, till now, UNKNOWN LORD!

Behold them, of Heathens, of Barbarians, of all times, and places, and names, and nations! A ſelect hoſt! a glorious band! whoſe numbers, as well as virtues, far exceed what human, or perhaps Chriſtian, charity had ever conceived.—" Is any Chriſtian brother offended? Bleſs GOD, thou contracted ſoul, that it is One of greater mercy than thyſelf who is to judge thee:" One who looks not for gathering where he did not ſcatter, nor for reaping where he did not ſow; one who will judge thoſe, not by the rule of the law or the goſpel, to whom neither the law nor the goſpel was vouchſafed: One who

who hath ſo little reſpect of perſons, that *in every nation he that wrought righteouſneſs,* according to the light and opportunity which God had put in his power, *is* now *accepted*[a]. Accordingly, numbers who had groped for their way with only the dim taper of reaſon to guide them, put thouſands, on this day, to the bluſh, who had loſt their way amidſt all the bright meridian beams of the goſpel-revelation.—Obſerve, for inſtance,

"That poor dark Indian, whoſe untutor'd mind"

had long looked round for GOD, but had, through the fault of his country and of his guides, miſtaken the Sun for HIM who made it. A miſtake altogether unpardonable in other thouſands, who, in light and leiſure, did only by a few grains exceed him. But the ſmall ray of the light of nature which fell on him, diſcovered to him no object that was *greater;* and the feeble wings of his unaſſiſted reaſon were able to carry him to none that was *higher.* This man, having practiſed many

[a] Acts x. 35.

many excellent virtues, is, through the mercy of GOD in CHRIST, not condemned; whilſt that other, who in vain, or to very little purpoſe, enjoyed the noon-day of the goſpel, is rejected.

See that other perſon, who was once a poor deſpiſed ſlave, but is now reſtored to *the glorious liberty of the ſons of God*, and waſhed by the blood of CHRIST from a deeper ſtain than ever was his Ethiopian hue. He, as a friend, is gladly welcomed by the Judge; whilſt the greater Barbarian, his Chriſtian maſter, who had "thirſted for his" ſweat and blood, as well as "gold," and who would ſcarce allow the poor wretch a ſoul, much leſs acquaint him with the means of ſaving it, is now diſmiſſed with, *I know thee not*. How vaſt the happineſs of the humble ſaint in his unexpected weight of glory! Yet one would think that he ſtill wants one ingredient to complete it; retaining ſtill his affection for his unworthy lord. With a wiſtful eye he looks if he may ſee him among the happy company around him.

But,

But, alas! he is not there. He ſees him on the other ſide. The heavenly tear ſeems to ſtart into his eye. The ſoft hand of an angel wipes it off.—Gentle ſpirit! worthy of a better lord, as thou haſt now found, that is the laſt tear which thou ſhalt ever ſhed!

§ 7. THUS will the adminiſtration of the Divine Providence ſufficiently clear itſelf, on this day, of all the reproaches which were ignorantly caſt upon it, on account of the ſeeming inequalities in the diſtribution of either the goods of fortune, or the means of ſalvation. The impartiality of the univerſal Parent to all the children of his great family in heaven and on earth, and the equity of the common Judge in weighing ſo ſcrupulouſly all circumſtances, appear now in ſo ſtrong a light, as to confound all thoſe who did once, on theſe accounts, *charge God fooliſhly* [a].—To illuſtrate this, we need ſcarce mention any more inſtances.—There, a mighty lord and his

[a] Job i. 22.

his pooreſt ſervant are called, to give, each, an account of his ſtewardſhip to their common Maſter. The account of the firſt is not yet examined; but it appears ſo long, that no perſon would chooſe to be called forth on this day, to anſwer for all the particulars of which it conſiſts. No wonder if he, who hath this labour to go through, doth tremble. Whereas the account of the other is ſhort, and its adjuſtment eaſy. "LORD, I have ſerved thee, and been faithful to my maſter. I had but little, and did my diligence gladly to give of that little [a]."——*Well done, good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Further, that once admired philoſopher who perverted his talents in ſo unworthy a manner, cannot now balance his account ſo eaſily as this perſon who once was deemed an idiot. The firſt, an enemy to the croſs of CHRIST, and a deſpiſer of that ſal-

[a] Sermons on Social Duties, p. 206.

ſalvation aſcribed in the goſpel to the Divine JESUS, corrupted ſociety with his tenets, and made many proſelytes to hell and deſtruction. Whereas the laſt led a life, which, if it was in a great meaſure uſeleſs, may alſo be ſaid to have been harmleſs. Whenever his mind diſcovered any traces of reaſon, it diſcovered at the ſame time ſome traces of religion; and, with this little fruit, from a tree on which ſo little culture was beſtowed, the Great Maſter of the vineyard is fully ſatisfied.

Mark, next, that crown ſo heavenly-bright! which the Judge is placing on the head of an illiterate and obſcure, but pious peaſant. This immortal crown, it ſeems, would have ſhone with never-fading luſtre on the head of that once dignified and profeſſed teacher of religion, had he been actuated with ſuch love to his Maſter, and ſuch zeal for the LORD GOD of hoſts, as to have honoured him whilſt others forgot him; and to have made his houſe, *whatever other men had done*, a temple to GOD, and a houſe of prayer. That he might thus exert his in-

influence to ſtop the progreſs of impiety and the neglect of domeſtic devotion, GOD called him forth in bad times; and, to give his example and advice the greater weight, endowed him with learning, eloquence, eminence, and honour. Angels were glad when they ſaw ſuch a man placed in the breach. They tuned their harps in order to rejoice over the converſion of ſinners. At the ſame time archangels, with ecſtatic gladneſs, prepared for him, as they thought, that ſparkling diadem: for they hoped, that, in gratitude to that GOD who delighted to do him honour, he would make ſuch improvement of his great talents, as might qualify him for filling, on this day, the vacant throne of that fallen Hierarch, whoſe better part he ſeemed to reſemble[a]. For; like him,

" ——his tongue
Dropt manna,—and he pleas'd the ear
With his perſuaſive accent,—tho' to nobler deeds
Timorous and ſlothful.——"

Unhappy man! what now avail all thy talents,

[a] See Par. Loſt, ii. 109.

talents, when thou haſt ſuffered another to deprive thee of ſuch a crown[a]?—But one ſad comfort ſtill remains, thou wilt avoid the fate of being ſingular; that which thou didſt once dread ſo much, even in a good cauſe. Many more, alas! have been negligent and unfaithful in the like manner. Forgetful of their character and aſhamed of their glory, they ſometimes thought their company too polite to make THE GALILEAN one of the party. They diſmiſſed him, therefore, at the time he ſhould have had acceſs, as the Roman governor did St Paul, when he ſaid unto him, *Go thy way at this time, at a more convenient ſeaſon I will ſend for thee.* Now he comes, though ſtill unſent for; and when he calls for their account, ah! what ſhall they reply? In vain will they plead that they preached his goſpel, or performed ſome public exhibitions in his ſervice. This ought they to have done, and not to have left other duties undone. In vain will they plead that their conduct was in compliance with the world

[a] Rev. iii. 11.

world around them; for they were warned not to be conformed unto the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind.—" What was it to you what other men did? you ought to have followed me[a]. If Devotion had been baniſhed from every other roof, and from every other table; with you ſhe ſhould have found an aſylum, with you ſhe ſhould have been ſheltered and entertained. If Piety had been ſlighted by all the world beſides, your heart, your lips, and your life, ſhould, on all occaſions, have praiſed, honoured, and recommended her[b]!" O that we had once more the opportunity! " It is now for ever over!"

If the conſequence of ſo fatal a miſcarriage reached no farther than theſe unhappy beings themſelves, the pity were the leſs. But, like the Apocalyptic dragon[c], which carried away thouſands by the ſweep of its tail, they infected thouſands by their example.—Who, indeed, could be pious, when

[a] John xxi. 22. [b] See Mal. ii. 7. [c] Rev. xii. 4.

when miniſters of the goſpel were indevout, not to ſay profane!

But away with this diſagreeable ſubject, till we take one other look of the happy multitudes which we have been viewing. On the contemplation of theſe glad hoſts we might dwell longer and longer ſtill, and find the pleaſure as infinite as their number. Yet we muſt, although with reluctance, turn our unwilling eyes for a little away from them. Let it ſuffice then in the mean time to obſerve, that they are many beyond computation, glorious beyond expreſſion, and glad beyond conception. They are all fair as the ſons of GOD, and beautiful as the heirs of immortality. They are waſhed from every ſtain of pollution by the blood of the LAMB, and *arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteouſneſs of ſaints*[a]. *No ſpot or wrinkle*, no fault or infirmity, *or any ſuch thing*, is to be ſeen among all their myriads. And though they differ in glory as one ſtar differeth from another, each reaping ac-

[a] Rev. xix. 8.

cording to the meaſure in which he ſowed, yet all have their reſpective capacities for happineſs completely full and ſatisfied. All are perfectly bleſſed; and each, with his own particular lot, is perfectly contented and happy; like the various members of the ſame body, none of which deſires to change its ſituation. And being thus completely happy, all are ready, with uplifted hearts and hands, to break out with their *new ſong*, and to begin their everlaſting Alleluiah!

O bleſſed change! from weak to ſtrong, from natural to ſpiritual, from earthly to heavenly, from corruptible to incorruptible, and from mortal to immortal! O bleſſed ſight! to behold it is almoſt heaven. *Who* now *ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect*[a]? Not even he who is *the accuſer of the brethren* can allege a ſingle article of condemnation againſt any one of the number. Will he ſay, that Manaſſeh there had ſold himſelf to do evil; that Paul was a blaſphemer; and Magdalene an eminent

[a] Rom. viii. 33.

nent ſinner? Will he ſay that theſe Galatians were idolaters; or that theſe Corinthians were guilty of almoſt every crime that could be named; and that there is not ſo much as one on whom there might not once be fixed ſome foul imputation or other;—nay, that there are among them, ſome even of thoſe who crucified the LORD of glory?—It is all granted: much owing to him who tempted them; but whoſe malice was over-ruled to their greater good, and to his greater ruin. It is granted, for the glory and praiſe of redeeming love, that they were greater ſinners than even he knew them to be; greater ſinners than even he, who ſaw not the ſecret corruptions of their hearts, had ever ſuſpected. But, then, they repented, while there was room for repentance; and *they were waſhed, they were ſanctified, they were juſtified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of their God*[a]. And now there remaineth no condemnation for them; and nothing ſhall

[a] 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.

ever ſeparate them from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS their LORD.

O happy people! whoſe ſins are forgiven, whoſe warfare is finiſhed, and whoſe ſouls are ſaved! Henceforth, no tempter, no ſin, no ſorrow, ſhall ever trouble you; for into the New Jeruſalem there ſhall in nowiſe enter any thing that defileth, any thing that offendeth. Henceforth, you ſhall be made pillars in the houſe of your GOD, from which you ſhall no more go out! You ſhall ſee GOD face to face; the light of his countenance will eternally ſhine upon your ſouls; and there ſhall be no darkneſs either within you or without you, for *there ſhall be no night there.*—Praiſe, praiſe without meaſure, without ceaſing, and without end, be to GOD, who hath prepared ſuch felicity for you, and who hath prepared you for ſuch felicity!—Let all the children of redemption join in one glad voice to praiſe him; and let every angel, of every order, join in the HALLELUIAH!

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

A View of the Wicked, and of the Issues of the Judgment.

§ 1. Remarks on general characters among those on the left-hand. § 2. The greatness of their guilt set forth, and the invalidity of their pleas. § 3. Particular characters instanced from scripture, and from common life. § 4. The issues of the judgment, in respect of both the bad and the good.

§ 1. AFTER viewing so glorious and so glad an host, it is painful to look now to that other side, where none are left but wicked men and evil spirits. The great day of the harvest is now come; and the wheat and the tares, however much they were mixed in the field, are, at length, eternally separated. And how awful is that separation! The nearest friends are now parted; and those that were once companions, in every thing but sin, are for ever divided. Of the two men

who were together in the field, the one is taken, and the other left. And even the huſband, ſee! it is no rare caſe, ſtands on the one ſide, and *the lamb that ate at his table and ſlept in his boſom* [a] ſtands on the other! The father on this ſide, the ſon on that; the one brother or ſiſter here, and there the other! How light were the bittereſt pangs of ſeparation by a temporal death, to theſe pains of the *ſecond death*, and to this parting which is eternal! How happy the friends who guarded againſt this event in time, by walking in the paths of holineſs, hand in hand with each other, and hand in hand with JESUS!

We are not, however, to imagine, that the good, who on earth *ſeparated themſelves* from the ſins of their wicked relations, and *came out from among them* (though, as Lot from Sodom, almoſt ſingly), ſhall feel any ſuch uneaſy ſenſation on this account, as to make them in any degree inſenſible of their own happineſs. Their benevolence, indeed, may incline them to commiſerate the

[a] 2 Sam. xii. 4.

the fate of ſuch relations and acquaintance; but their holineſs, their love to GOD, and their zeal for his glory, will make them heartily acquieſce in their puniſhment, and even applaud the juſtice of it. Like Ruth of old, they can cheerfully forego all relation to thoſe who are not related to the GOD of Iſrael, and diſown all connection with thoſe who are not of his people. All the pain of ſeparation muſt, therefore, lie on the one ſide of that gulph, over which no miſery, any more than guilt, can paſs. On that ſide, indeed, it is manifeſt; for, there every ſoul is anguiſh, and every face is torture. Were hell no more than what theſe miſerable wretches now feel, who, for all the pleaſures, profits, and honours, of ten thouſand worlds, would bear ſuch anguiſh for a ſingle minute! Every dire review, every preſent pang, and every dreadful expectation of the future, centre here, as in a point. All the arrows of GOD, as it were, ſtick faſt in the ſoul at once, and with their poiſon drink up the ſpirits. But all the torments of the preſent and the

paſt, incomprehenſible as they are to all but thoſe who feel them, are tolerable in compariſon of thoſe more exquiſite pains, which are to commence from that awful and dreaded period which is now juſt at hand.

See how the Arch-fiend and all his apoſtate legions
("Oh! how unlike thoſe hoſts from whom they fell!")
tremble and gnaw their lips with pain, as they wait the pronouncing of their final doom. If, even at the proſpect of this day, while at ſo many thouſand years diſtance, they were ſo much alarmed [a], what muſt be their fearful horrors now when it is arrived!—It is true, the moſt frightful imagination could ſcarce conceive what addition could poſſibly be made to their former miſery. But *who knoweth the power of the Almighty's wrath* [b], or how infinitely it may exceed what the large capacities of even theſe ſpirits themſelves could either comprehend or *fear?*—Till this day, their guilt was always accumulating, but the reckoning was in a great mea-

[a] Mat. viii. 29. [b] Pſ. xc. 11.

meaſure delayed. Now, every article of the debt is ſummed up; and not a ſingle ſoul among either the ſaved or the loſt, but has ſomething to lay to their charge. How much this may ſwell the account, it is impoſſible to tell. If the puniſhment, therefore, keeps pace with the guilt, who can ſay how many thouſand times the infernal furnace may be more heated, and the ſulphureous lake of liquid fire made more penetrating and burning? Who can ſay how many thouſand times the chains may be made more racking, and the darkneſs more palpable; yet

"Still ſerving to diſcover ſights of wo?"

Who can ſay how many thouſand times the anguiſh and deſpair of the ſoul may be made more killing, and the worm of conſcience more gnawing? Or what finite mind can underſtand the thouſand thouſandth part of that eſſence of hell which is ſtamped on every one of theſe ingredients, by their being made all of them ETERNAL!—In their expectance of this dreadful doom then, with whatever worſe

either

either immortal ſpirits can endure, or an incenſed GOD inflict; let us leave theſe apoſtate angels, like a dark *cloud of locuſts* hovering in the ſmoke of the *bottomleſs pit*[a], and looking over the impaſſable gulph to that glorious ſociety of which they once were members;—there let us leave them, while we turn our eyes on thoſe apoſtates of our own race, who joined theſe evil ſpirits in their guilt, and who muſt therefore have a ſhare in their ruin.

Ah! how vaſt, how inconceivably vaſt, their numbers! Fain would charity decline to make any compariſon between them and the ſaved. Fain would charity cover here, not only the multitude of ſins, but alſo of ſinners. But HE who is CHARITY itſelf, and whoſe name is LOVE, hath told us, that wide was the gate, and broad the way, which led to deſtruction, and that many were they who walked in it; and likewiſe, that ſtrait was the gate, and narrow the way, which led to life, and that few, in compariſon, were they who found it[b].—

That

[a] Rev. ix. [b] Mat. viii. 13.

That ſo many have found it, is, indeed, a greater wonder than that all theſe have miſſed it; that the grace of GOD ſhould, for a race of ſinners, do ſo much; and the depravity of human nature, aided by all the arts of hell, ſhould do no more. If we read only the catalogue of thoſe ſins which, without repentance and renovation, we were told would bar the gates of heaven upon all who were guilty of them, and remember how much all theſe ſins prevailed in the world, we ſhall ceaſe to wonder at the multitude of theſe miſerable beings.

In thoſe liſts, which few, alas! cared to examine, with a view of finding out their own character and fate, we ſaw the *ungodly*, and the *unrighteous*, the *fearful*, and the *unbelieving*; the *murderers*, the *fornicators*, the *adulterers*, the *idolaters*, and the *liars*; the *thieves*, the *drunkards*, the *revilers*, and the *extortioners*; with the *covetous*, the *malicious*, the *envious*, and the like[a];—all ex-

[a] See 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v. 19—21. Rev. xxi. 8. & xxii. 15, &c.

excluded for ever from happineſs and from hope, when once the ſeaſon of repentance and of grace ſhould be over. And ſee! of all theſe kinds, from all ages, and from all countries, what numbers ſtand, in fearful expectation, before the tribunal! See! how thoſe of every kind are conſorted together, not to comfort, but to curſe each other, on account of the hand which they had in one another's damnation.—The ungodly ſtand in the front; thoſe firſt-rate ſinners againſt *the firſt and great commandment*. They believed (what even devils could not doubt) that there is a GOD; but they did not love him, they did not worſhip him, they did not fear him. How do they now execrate their blind folly in aſking, *who was the Almighty that they ſhould ſerve him, or what profit they ſhould have if they ſhould pray unto him*[a]!—See, their crimes are all manifeſt in the light of the Judge's countenance. What forgetfulneſs of their MAKER! what ingratitude to the REDEEMER! what grieving to the SPIRIT! what impiety in their life and con-

[a] Job xxi. 15.

converſation! And, as if life were too ſhort a ſpace to ſin in, what miſchiefs have thouſands of them done, even when dead, by the poiſon of their writings!—Curſed was the wit that ſerved but to ſupport profanity!—Curſed was the ingenuity that ſerved but to damn its owner!

And behold alſo the *unrighteous*, who ſinned againſt the ſecond commandment, which was like unto the firſt. Now all the ſcenes of their injuſtice are unfolded; and all thoſe whom they injured in ſoul, body, eſtate, or reputation, ſtand confronted with them before the Judge. Their open violence is not more viſible than their ſecret fraud. How do the *fearful*, next, curſe their own cowardice, in being aſhamed of GOD, or afraid of the reproach of man! Now GOD is *aſhamed of them*; and too late they find, that they ſhould have feared HIM only who is able to deſtroy, both ſoul and body in hell-fire. And the *unbelieving*, who could not truſt GOD, nor give credit to his word, have now the moſt dreadful and feeling conviction that no

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jot of his word ſhall ever paſs away, and that his threatnings and his promiſes hold equally true.—What need we dwell on this liſt, or mark the fate of the various characters deſigned in it;—ſuch as the *murderers*, who hated in their heart, or even did not love, their brother; the *unclean*, whoſe ſecret ſins, even thoſe of the heart, are then brought to light; or the *liars*, who ſtand on the brink of that lake in which they are to have their eternal *portion?*—What need we mark how the *thieves* are now doomed to everlaſting chains, and, together with thoſe debtors (more dangerous to ſociety, though more ſpecious, than they!) who ſpent on their extravagance what was due to the poor and induſtrious creditor, are ready to be caſt into that priſon from which they ſhall not come out till they pay the uttermoſt farthing? Or what need we mark how the *drunkards* are now deprived of every ſtupifying opiate to their pain; how the *reviler* can no more detract from the good, nor the mighty *extortioner* devour the indigent,

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the orphan, and the widow?—Shall we liſten to the ſad detail of all their crimes; to their mutual accuſations, and to their upbraidings of each other?—Shall we—But who could poſſibly bear the ſhocking rehearſal!—O the dreadful meeting now of thoſe who were formerly companions in ſin, and promoters, in any ſhape, of one another's condemnation!—How unlike the meeting of thoſe who lived in the bonds of love, and led one another to JESUS!—But we muſt not yet drop our ſubject, although the proſecution of it be ſo very unpleaſant.

See, then, ranked on the left, the rulers who were negligent or unjuſt, and the ſubjects who were rebellious and diſobedient; the maſters who were unmerciful, and the ſervants who were unfaithful; the parents who did not *travail again till Chriſt was formed* in their children, and the children who were not dutiful to their parents; the rich who were not devout and charitable, and the poor who were not contented and pious.—In a word, ſee there

all

all thoſe who allowed themſelves to live in the practice of any known ſin, or in the neglect of any known duty; all who did not conſtantly and ſincerely, as their powers and opportunities allowed, love GOD, reverence his name, ſanctify his ſabbaths, and keep his teſtimonies; all who did not love their neighbours, and do to others as they would have others do to them; all who waſted the ſeaſon of grace either in wickedneſs or ſloth, and laid out their time, their talents, and opportunities, on the concerns of the body, earth, and time, to the prejudice or neglect of the ſoul, eternity, and heaven.—All theſe, a crowd as numerous as wretched, and as wretched as evil, ſtand transformed into the ſame likeneſs, and ſeized with the ſame fear with their aſſociated devils, before the judgment-ſeat of JESUS.

All the allowances which infinite mercy, guided by impartial juſtice, could poſſibly make, have already been made for the want of knowledge and opportunity, the ſmallneſs of ſtrength, the weakneſs of

grace, the power of cuſtom, and the force and ſupriſal of temptations. But it appears that theſe alleviating conſiderations, to which thouſands, through the mercy of GOD in CHRIST, have owed their ſalvation, can *hardly* extend to ſuch as ſinned, with a high hand, againſt all the light, againſt all the love of the goſpel. To every one of thoſe, mercy was offered, if he would repent, and the aid of the Spirit, if he would earneſtly pray and apply for it. How then can they poſſibly eſcape who neglected and made light of ſo great a ſalvation? To have *ſtumbled in the noon-day as in the night*, is indeed the chief aggravation of their guilt, and what renders thoſe ſins unpardonable in them, which might have been excuſed in others. Motes are ſeen in the day, whilſt mountains are unobſerved in the night. The bare mention of a few rules which theſe people once conſidered as obſolete, is now ſufficient to ſilence their complaints, and to juſtify their condemnation. *The ſervant who knew his maſter's will, and*

did it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes[a]; and, *They who are aſhamed of Jeſus or of his goſpel before men, of them ſhall He be aſhamed before his Father and his angels*[b]. *The meaſure which any one ſhall mete unto others, the ſame ſhall be meaſured unto himſelf again*[c]. *Whatſoever is not of faith, that is ſin*[d]; and, *Without holineſs, no man ſhall* in peace *ſee the Lord*[e].

O that they had been wiſe, that they had remembered theſe things in time, and conſidered their latter end! then had they eſcaped the wrath of this day, and ſhared in all the triumphs of the redeemed;—then had their peace been as a river, and their righteouſneſs as a ſtream that floweth!

It would be a pleaſure to diſmiſs this diſagreeable ſubject as faſt as poſſible, and to turn away our eyes from viewing theſe unhappy beings. But it may be proper to dwell upon the theme a little longer, as the contemplation of ſuch extreme miſery may teach us to put a due value on happineſs. We

[a] Luke xii. 47. [b] Luke ix. 26. [c] Mat. vii. 2.
[d] Rom. xiv. 23. [e] Heb. xii. 14.

We may therefore obſerve, that as on the other ſide there are ſome of all ages and nations and kindreds and tongues and people, ſo there are likewiſe here; and more, I fear, than we imagined, of ſuch as called Abraham their father, and ſuch as called CHRIST their maſter. Once they were firſt, but now they are laſt; thoſe to whom only Noah and Lot preached, and thoſe to whom none at all preached, and even the devils themſelves, having ſomething to allege in extenuation of their guilt, which theſe, who withſtood the laſt efforts of Divine love, have not. Theſe have, therefore, cauſe to look for ſo much the greater condemnation, as they reſiſted thoſe offers of mercy, and neglected thoſe means of ſalvation, which the others had never in their power. And even of thoſe who enjoyed equal advantages, and had the ſame common mercies and means of ſalvation; they who, under equal temptations, had the negative merit of being leſs wicked; ſhall have, in the ſame proportion, the leſs torment. For, in evil as well as in good,

every man ſhall reap according to the meaſure in which he ſowed. In hell, as well as in heaven, there are *many manſions*.

But in all the characters that come under our view on this day, there does not occur ſo much as one that is only indifferent. In the opinion of men, there might have been ſuch; but in the judgment of GOD, there can be none. The *lukewarm Chriſtians*, who were indeed no Chriſtians at all, are, for that very reaſon, rejected by the Judge, as were of old the Laodiceans, becauſe they were *nether hot nor cold*[a]. See how many thouſands, who had leaned to this broken reed, now fall upon it, and feel their ſouls pierced through and through with its poiſoned ſplinters! Dreadful diſappointment this! to ſuch as flattered themſelves that their ſins would be entirely overlooked, ſince they were not of the deepeſt dye. And ſtill more intolerable is the pain to ſuch as were not only perſuaded, but even taught to believe aſſuredly,

[a] Rev. iii. 16.

ly, that their ſins were only venial, and might be done away after their death by the merit of a few pence and vicarious prayers; or, at the moſt, by a gentle dipping or two in ſome fiery *Phlegethon* of their own creation. On this downy pillow, like the *rich man* in the goſpel [a], they fell aſleep; but how dreadful, like his, their awakening! That *bathing flood*, which was to have been applied to thoſe ſtains which nothing but the blood of JESUS could waſh off, has not yet been found; or only found with this very awful difference, that its ſulphureous ſtreams are moſt penetrating, and its intenſe torments never-ending.—*Infallibility*, too late, finds its miſtakes: Purgatory and ſupererogation had their exiſtence nowhere but in fancy.

Yes, ye votaries of this belief, you now, alas too late! find, that *in the grave there was no* ſuch *device*, any more than *repentance*; and that all who died not good enough to be acquitted, died bad enough to be condemned.—See thoſe, who were

[a] Luke xvi. 19.

the dupes of that fatal doctrine, now looking around for the author of it, to charge him with their ruin. Lo! the chief promoter of this fatal hereſy appears conſpicuous, beſide the *great dragon, the old ſerpent*, who had *given him his power, his ſeat, and great authority;* that he might *blaſpheme againſt God, to blaſpheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, and to make war with the ſaints*[a]. And of this high truſt repoſed in him by Satan, it appears how highly deſerving hath been this perſonage. Of old he was deſigned by the names of *The man of ſin, Antichriſt*, and *The beaſt;* and ſtill he is diſtinguiſhed by that wo! wo! wo! like a triple crown upon all his *heads*, for there are *many* of them, all marked *with the name of blaſphemy*. See! around the *myſterious beaſt* and his emiſſaries, which iſſue from his mouth in the ſhape of *frogs*[b], ſwarm all his abettors, who *worſhipped him and his image*, and received his mark upon their forehead. Like a ſecond flight of

[a] Rev. xvi. 13, 14. & ix. 2. [b] Ib.

of locuſts, they hover in the ſmoke that riſes from the mouth of that bottomleſs pit below them, and darken the ſky of even this day with their numbers. From ſuch vaſt multitudes who were ſlaves to this Head of the ſpiritual Babylon, it appears how deeply that city made all nations *drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication:* the dreadful award of which is, according to the denunciation of old, That they ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of GOD, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and be tormented with fire and brimſtome, without reſt, day or night, for ever and ever [b].

Awful judgment this upon the *great city!* How many thouſands are involved in it, and how bitterly do they deplore their ruin! See how they who *made merchandize of the ſouls of men*, lament now their folly, and mourn for the loſs of their own ſouls, as well as of thoſe treaſures which they had ſo dearly purchaſed. *Alas!*

[b] Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

las! alas! they cry, *that mighty city is fallen; in one hour is her judgment come; in one hour is ſhe become deſolate!*—Awful judgment! But we muſt applaud it, nay, rejoice at it; for, ſee, all heaven does! The holy prophets and apoſtles are glad, in viewing the ſecond and laſt perdition and overthrow of the MOTHER of ABOMINATIONS. At the ſight of its fate, they recollect the dreadful emblem which a *mighty angel* gave long ago of its deſtruction, by daſhing a ſtone like a great milſtone into the ſea; whilſt he cried, *Thus ſhall Babylon be thrown down, and be found no more at all!*—Behold, the ſame angel is ready to break out, a ſecond time, with his former ſhout, and to repeat once more with ecſtatic joy, *Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen!* whilſt all the ſons of heaven are ready to join him with their *Alleluiah!*—Amen! For righteous and true, LORD our GOD, are thy judgments.—*Alleluiah* [a]!

But mark one other, and a ſtill greater, cauſe of our rejoicing over Babylon, before we

[a] Rev. xviii. 2—21.

we loſe ſight of her. It is, that GOD hath infinitely more mercy upon her than ever ſhe had upon others. For, lo! what numbers *come out*, even *from Her*, to partake of that ſalvation, which their charity would hardly allow to their brethren. But *what could theſe poor ſheep do*, when led aſtray even by their ſhepherds! From theſe people the book of knowledge was ſealed up; and how could they ſhun the thouſand broad paths which led to error? The *woes*, therefore, and the *vials of wrath*, from which, through mercy, they were ſaved, are all poured upon the heads of thoſe who were the authors and abettors of the MYSTERY.

§ 2. The dangerous communion which we have been juſt now viewing, taught that moſt ſins were light and venial; and in all communions, too many, alas! deceived themſelves with the ſame fatal notion. Indeed, according to human eſtimation in general, if a man was but negatively good, ſeldom was he abſolutely condemned, though he did

did not exert himſelf in poſitive acts of piety and benevolence. Still ſeldomer was any one condemned for his neglect of GOD or his own ſoul, if he had only refrained from being obnoxious to mankind. Such mutual toleration and charity, it is true, became us; becauſe *verily we were all*, in a more or leſs degree, *guilty*. But, in the proceedings of this day, too, too many find, that it was crime enough to *bind up their talent in a napkin*; to conſume upon themſelves, in *fine cloaths and ſumptuous fare*, all their *good things* [a]; whilſt GOD was forgotten, and the poor neglected. And many find, that only ſlothfulneſs in the concerns of the ſoul, or *the want of oil in their lamps*, is crime enough to incur the penalty of being baniſhed from GOD, to dwell in outer darkneſs [b]. The tree which only cumbered the ground, without bearing fruit, is ſentenced to the fire [c]. Others, who had more than a tolerable character with men, for the partial obſervance of the *ſecond* table of the law, in which only the

[a] Luke xvi. 25. [b] Mat. xxv. 3, 10. [c] Luke xiii. 7.

the moſt of men thought themſelves concerned, are condemned by GOD for their neglect of the *firſt*; neither their juſtice nor their charity being ſufficient to compound for their want of piety, and their neglect of devotion. And many are impeached with that great article of *condemnation*, their *not believing* and *truſting on the Eternal Son of God* [a].

Amongſt men, if actions were materially good, they were generally commended; and the principle from which they flowed was ſeldom ſcanned. If an unjuſt judge avenged a poor widow of her adverſary, we called the action good, without examining whether it proceeded from a regard either to GOD or man: Whereas GOD looked chiefly to the heart and intention; and, according to theſe, ſtamped its proper character on every action. To bring to light, therefore, the principles and motives of mens conduct, forms a conſiderable part of the inquiry on this day. Did they flow from a ſingle view to the glory of

[a] Jo. iii. 18.

of GOD; or from real love and benevolence to men? If they did, they ſhall now have their reward; if they did not, they have had their reward already. Hard teſt this, for the moſt of what we ſuppoſed once to have been good actions. How many of them, when weighed in this balance of the ſanctuary, are found light as the chaff when driven before the wind! Hear, for inſtance, the motive which determined the unjuſt judge to relieve the widow. *Though I fear not God, nor regard man, he ſaid within himſelf, Yet becauſe this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me*[a].—In ridding himſelf of the poor widow's importunity, this man had his full reward for the juſtice he had done to her. He had no eye to the glory of GOD, or to the obedience of his laws; and therefore he can have no reaſon to hope that GOD ſhould reward him. He had been *ſacrificing to his own net, and burning incenſe to his own drag*[b]; let the gods whom he worſhipped ſave him. What a pity

[a] Luke xviii. 4, 5. [b] Hab. i. 16.

pity ſo many good actions ſhould on this day loſe their reward, on account of their having ſprung from mean and ſelfiſh motives! The very ſame fountain, had it been allowed to run out at another ſluice, might have proved a ſtream of living waters, which would have, through all Eternity, refreſhed the ſoul.

In like manner, in human reckoning, only a few of the groſſer crimes were thought to be *ſins unto the death.* But now it appears a dreadful truth, though once but little regarded, that *the wages of* every *ſin*, unrepented of, *is death* eternal. It alſo appears, that moſt ſins, though once conſidered as only ſingle acts which reached no farther than the perſon of the ſinner himſelf, were yet of ſo infectious a nature, that they ſpread their influence farther than could ever, till now, be imagined. Evil words, ſpoken perhaps at random, and evil deeds, afterwards little thought of, were not, as the authors of them fondly ſuppoſed, immediately loſt and forgotten. With however careleſs a hand they were ſcat-

ſcattered, yet, like ſeed that is ſown in too rank a ſoil, they grew luxuriantly, and ſpread and multiplied in an amazing manner. They were handed down from one perſon and age to another, for perhaps thouſands of years, until this day; and ſtill accumulating, as was obſerved of the guilt of the devils, at ſuch a rate, that now the reckoning is moſt dreadfully enlarged.—So cloſely were the interests of mankind warped into each other, and ſo ſtrongly rooted in their nature was the principle of imitation, that there was not a ſingle perſon, how inſignificant ſoever he appeared, whoſe good or bad qualities terminated in himſelf alone, without contributing alſo to the good or evil of others around him. And this influence ſtill increaſed in proportion to any one's authority and ſtation. Hence, whilſt ſome have a large ſhare in the merit of good deeds, which, in their own perſon, they never performed; others, on account of their careleſs or criminal example, ſtand charged with a great part of the guilt of the family or ſociety in which they lived.

This

This ſeems to be the caſe with that rich glutton who miſled his five brethren.—Others, who moved in a ſtill higher ſphere, are charged with a great ſhare of the guilt of that age, country, or community, in which they had a place; and with having contributed to the ruin of thouſands of ſouls of whom they had no perſonal knowledge till this very inſtant. Such is Jeroboam there, who *made all Iſrael to ſin:* And ſuch are thouſands more around him, whoſe example, in their reſpective ſpheres, helped to keep vice in countenance, and to give, as it were, a ſanction to impiety.

Yet theſe principal movers in ſin do not engroſs the whole of any perſon's puniſhment, any more than of his guilt. The worſt of men, or even of evil ſpirits, could only tempt and entice. The mind muſt have given its own conſent, before it could be acceſſory to any crime. Though, therefore, the firſt and principal promoters of ſin, like the capital traders in a ſtock, come in for the chief ſhare of the acquiſition; yet their agents and drudges have an equal

title

title to, at leaſt, a ſmaller ſhare of the wages of that iniquity which they contributed to forward. From the equity of the Judge, every one receives his due proportion, and that only. Not one, even of his worſt enemies, hath reaſon to complain of being injured. Indeed, ſtrict juſtice itſelf, if it throws into their cup every drop of gall which it may, is more than enough to make the draught intolerably bitter. No falſe accuſation, no ill-grounded charge, is requiſite to make even the leaſt guilty deſerving of everlaſting torment. Even the *leaſt guilty*, when all his ſins (whether public, or tranſacted only in the dark chambers of the heart,) are made manifeſt by the light of the Judge's countenance, is found, as in the Prophet's viſion [a], to have committed greater, *and ſtill greater abominations*, than what the *moſt guilty* perhaps was ſuſpected of till now.—To the truth of every charge brought againſt them on account of thoſe ſecret ſins, their own accuſing conſciences and the Holy SPIRIT who ſtrove ſo long with

[a] Ezek. viii.

with them, bear witneſs with the Judge, *who knew their thoughts even afar off.*—Of other ſins, which were not only conceived in the heart, but brought to light in words or actions, angels and men are competent witneſſes; as are alſo thoſe evil ſpirits, who, after ſeducing theſe wretches, are now ready to inſult and torment them.

To make their aggravated guilt the more apparent, every Perſon of the Sacred TRINITY ſhows what he had done for them. Angels declare their miniſtrations in their favour. Miniſters tell how often they exhorted and warned them. Conſcience approves its fidelity; and all other creatures atteſt that they were not wanting in their ſervices.——" For thee, did not I give my beloved and only Son?"—" I lay down my life on the croſs?"—" and I unweariedly offer to apply all the benefits of redemption, and to give all my helps and all my conſolations?"—" Did not I," ſaith one Angel, " againſt evil ſpirits fight thy battles?" —" And I," ſaith another, " frequently delivered thee when deaths and dangers were

nigh thee."—"I ſpread my pinions o'er thee while aſleep:"—"And I ſtood at thy right-hand while thou wert awake."—"In thy ſickneſs, I was ſent to thee a thouſand times with comfort:"—"And I, in thy health, was bidden to ward off a multitude of evils which ſought to aſſail thee."——In a word,—"A thouſand times have I deſcended from heaven to miniſter unto thee," is the voice of each of ten thouſand angels.

—And how often, add many miniſters of the goſpel, have we offered thee mercy, and warned thee of thy impending danger? The times, the places, the occaſions, the expreſſions, we well remember. The very duſt of our feet we call to witneſs, and heaven and earth; for they heard us, when we called them to record againſt thee. —"I (ſaith one) alarmed thee with Sinai's terrors:"—"And I (ſaith another) ſtrove to captivate thee with the love of JESUS." —"I offered to thee all the riches of CHRIST, freely; and beſought thee, with tears, to accept of ſalvation." "And I (adds

(adds another) ſhowed thee heaven open to the chief of ſinners; whilſt I uſed the utmoſt earneſtneſs to perſuade thee to enter in to it: I ſhowed thee the open wounds in the ſide of the SAVIOUR, and in his hands extended to receive thee; and beſought thee with intreaties and tears, to fly to them, as a dove to the clefts of her rock. —Seemingly thou didſt aſſent. I thought thou hadſt been ſincerely reſolved, and I adminiſtred to thee the ſealing ordinances of the goſpel."—" And all of us, (ſay they with one voice), hoping thou couldſt not reſiſt the amazing efforts of the love of GOD, expected we ſhould on this day, with rejoicing angels, congratulate thee on thy felicity.—But, alas! we can only waſh our hands from the blood of thy ſoul, of which we are clear; and ſhake, as we do our raiment, every imputation of thy deſtruction from us. On us no part of the blame can be faſtened; *in our ſkirts thy blood* cannot be found. For, although *we have laboured in vain, and ſpent our ſtrength*

for nought; yet ſurely our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God[a]."

And hear further how Conſcience, GOD's vicegerent in the ſoul, approves in the like manner its fidelity.—What warnings to avoid ſin, and to repent of it! What admonitions to the practice of duty! what checks before, and what rebukes after, the commiſſion of evil!—All of theſe, though once ſtifled, will now obtain a hearing. In ſpite of a thouſand arts, firſt to drown and ſilence this monitor within, and then to ſtupify and ſear it; yet it ſtill perſiſted in its office, till at length, like GOD and angels, it was induced, reluctantly, to give the hardened ſinner over.—Nor will the thouſand thouſand mercies of the inferior and inanimate creation fail, on this day, to bring their accuſations againſt the wicked, and to aggravate their condemnation. If the earth bore and fed them; if the ſun enlightened and warmed them; if other creatures miniſtered to them, and yielded them food and raiment; if com-

forts

[a] Iſ. lxix. 4.

forts, without intermiſſion, flowed upon them; or if Providence, at times, exerciſed them with ſore trials and troubles;—all was meant to lead their ſouls to GOD, and all will ſerve now to witneſs againſt them, and to juſtify the ſeverity of their ſentence.

After all this evidence, will any one deny a tittle of the charge? After all this aggravation, will any one plead that he is not guilty? To attempt the firſt, in the face of ſuch a cloud of *ſwift witneſſes*, were impoſſible; and to think of the ſecond, were as idle.—Will any one plead that he uſed the means of ſalvation to the beſt of his power; or that there was any inſuperable bar of fate, or ſecret decree of heaven, in force againſt him? It is impoſſible. For, this day ſhows, what indeed was ſufficiently plain before, that for ſuch excuſes there is no manner of foundation:—that GOD was wanting to none but ſuch as were wofully wanting to themſelves:—and that every loſt ſinner is the author of his own ruin; which GOD, conſiſtently with the

eternal rules of his government, could not poſſibly have done any more to avert than what he did [a]. Indeed the thoughts of men and of angels are loſt in aſtoniſhment at his having done ſo much. Imputations, it is true, have been liberally caſt upon his mercy; but on this day, it will be cleared of them, and will vindicate itſelf to the ſatisfaction of the univerſe, even in the awful article of this multitude's eternal condemnation.

If the rebels of one petty province of Creation, who ſtood out againſt every offer of grace, and every effort of reconciling love, are made examples of, in order to deter a thouſand other worlds from the like guilt, and warn them of the like danger; or, if a handful of Incurables, who by their own wilful obſtinacy have defeated even the ſkill of the Almighty Phyſician, are ſhut up in a lazar-houſe where they cannot infect others with their diſeaſes:—Can any one think that their fate reflects either on the wiſdom or mercy of the

[a] Iſ. v. 4.

the great Governor of the Univerſe? Or can any one ſay that their puniſhment exceeds their guilt? They themſelves cannot now ſay ſo much. For, however lightly they once thought of ſin, they ſee its demerit now in ſuch a light, that they cannot but acknowledge that even eternal torments are ſcarce adequate to its evil. Accordingly, among all the pleas which they advance, we do not find any complaint of their puniſhment being greater than they deſerved. Indeed, there is no room for urging ſuch a plea, by thoſe who were ſo often warned of their danger, that their ſuffering may be conſidered as their own deliberate choice.

What other pleas, then, do they offer? For, if they themſelves, or any creature in all the univerſe, can ſay a ſingle word in favour of any of them, it ſhall be heard. —Methinks I hear ſome plead before the Judge, that they *propheſied;* ſome, that they *wrought miracles;* ſome, that they *caſt out devils in his name;* and ſome, that they

preached his goſpel [a].—As all theſe excuſes were long ago anſwered and obviated by the Judge, it is enough now to make the ſame ſhort reply to them which he did then: *I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.* Or, if this reply be thought too ſhort, the accuſing Spirit can give them a longer anſwer. He can tell them, That his ſervant Balaam propheſied; that the beaſt which carried him was enabled to perform a miracle; that the other *myſterious beaſt*, his depute, had filled the world with lying wonders, by the power which he had delegated to him; that Judas had caſt out devils; that many preached like angels who did not live like men; and that he himſelf, who hoped for no ſalvation, had, in the form of an angel of light, done all theſe things by turns.

—I hear ſome plead, that they gave *tithes of mint and aniſe* [b]; and that, with a ſcrupulous exactneſs, they kept ſeveral of the commandments. But it appears that they made no ſcruple of breaking others, of as much,

[a] Mat. vii. 22. [b] Mat. xxiii. 23.

much, or even greater importance; idly ſuppoſing, that, by the performance of ſome ceremonies or leſſer duties, they might compound for their neglect of the *weightier matters of the law*. It appears alſo, that their obſervance of thoſe precepts which they kept, aroſe from no regard to God, but from ſome baſe motive, or from their having no opportunity or temptation to tranſgreſs them. The only comfort, therefore, which theſe can expect, is, that no bitter drop ſhall be mingled with their cup, but what they wrought for.—If, for example, they were not guilty of extortion, injuſtice, or uncleanneſs; for extortion, injuſtice, or uncleanneſs, they ſhall not be puniſhed. But there are accuſations enow that are ſtill faſtened upon them; altho' it is, no doubt, ſome comfort not to be in the number of the moſt guilty and moſt miſerable.

Again, I hear ſome plead, that they gave all their goods *to feed the poor*; and others, that they gave *their body to be burned for religion.*

ligion[a]. It is painful to diſcover that there was ſometimes an appearance of religion, where there was none of its real power. But the moſt precious metals were generally the moſt liable to be counterfeited. Accordingly, it appears, that part of the goods which the former had given to the poor, was due to the induſtrious creditor, and to others whom they injured in their dealings. To give away, therefore, what was not their own, was not charity but iniquity. The motive too, which was *to receive praiſe of men*, or to compound for guilt by giving away what they could perhaps keep no longer, is a dead fly that corrupts this fineſt ointment. And, with reſpect to the latter, it appears from the dark page allotted to them in the great book, that their ſouls were ſo much infected as not to be purified by the burning of the body; to which, it ſeems, they truſted more than to that Blood, the efficacy of which only could cleanſe and ſave them.

§ 3.

[a] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

§ 3. SHALL we break off from this diſagreeable ſubject with theſe obſervations on general characters, or ſhall we particularize a few of the unhappy number? The firſt would be more agreeable; but the laſt may, perhaps, be more uſeful.—See, therefore, Cain bearing ſtill the mark fixed upon him of old by the Divine vengeance, and cruſhed under the weight of an infintely heavier puniſhment than that which he once complained he could not bear [a]. Happy! could thoſe who *meet him* now, *kill him*. But, as they can only torment him, his affrighted ſpirit ſtill ſeeks to ſhun them. In vain; for there is now no *land of Nod* to which he may fly, either from them or from himſelf.

See thoſe who ſcoffed at Enoch and Noah for their ſingular piety; with thoſe who laughed to ſcorn the man that was godly. Now *God ſcorneth the ſcorners*, and is aſhamed of thoſe who were aſhamed of being religious. Nay, the very devils upbraid

[a] Gen. iv. 15.

braid them with their folly, and ridicule it with keenneſs.

See the inhabitants of Sodom, ſhaking at the dread expectation of their ſecond and eternal overthrow. In this they are not ſingular; for the inhabitants of many other places lie as deep in guilt and condemnation: only *one of a city, or two of a family*, being here and there taken and brought to Sion [a].—And ſee her who wiſtfully looked back on Sodom and its pleaſures, after ſhe had been in ſo faira way of eſcaping. Over her ſhoulder ſhe ſtill ſeems to look languiſhingly on the burning world; for there, alas! was all her portion. And how many are they around her, who, after having trod for a while in the way of ſalvation, turned their foot again to the path of deſtruction! They had ſet their face, as if they had meant to *flee with their life to the mountains;* but by ſlackening their pace, and travelling lazily on the road to heaven, they were arreſted by death and judg-

[a] Jer. iii. 14.

judgment in the midst of their journey.—*Remember Lot's wife.*

Behold Esau still weeping, but not alone, because he sold a better than an earthly birthright for a morsel of meat, and there is no room left for repentance.—The wife of Potiphar is distinguished among those who took no pains to subdue their irregular and unlawful passions. Her cries and tears are now real and not counterfeit[a]. —Pharaoh, with many thousands more, perceive now, that *no man ever hardened himself against God and prospered.*—Jannes and Jambres! what now avail your many miracles, which serve only to sink you deeper in destruction than all others who practised or consulted sorcery and divination? *Mad* were those *diviners* indeed, who were so busy in looking for the fate of others, as to take no thought about their own.

Zimri and Cozbi are now found by the judgment just as death left them; with all their reeking guilt about them, and denied

[a] Gen. xxxix. 18.

denied one moment's warning to prepare their reckoning [a]!—Ah! why were they ſo thoughtleſs as to venture upon any ſin till they had firſt made *a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell!*—Ah! how many more have been thus ſurpriſed in the midſt of their iniquity, and ſummoned to eternity,

— "Even in the bloſſoms of their ſins;
No reckoning made; but ſent to their account
With all their imperfections on their head!"

In the front of thoſe who ſinned preſumptuouſly, againſt the cleareſt light and the moſt convincing knowledge of their duty, behold Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs. He *ſees* the MESSIAH now, alas, too *nigh* [b]. But the dreadful gulph ſhall ſoon lie betwixt.—If one article of condemnation brought by a merciful angel againſt this unhappy prophet, be his cruelty to a brute, in ſmiting thrice the aſs that carried him; what ſhall become of their ſouls who gave their fellow-creatures no better treatment? If the cruel and

[a] Num. xxv. 8. [b] Num. xxiv. 17.

and hard-hearted maſter, the unfeeling landlord, the oppreſſive tyrant, or his more oppreſſive ſervant, who ſmote their brethren with a rod of iron, and exacted the uttermoſt farthing with rigour, ſhall have their portion in the ſame region of hell with Balaam, they are mercifully dealt with. But alas! a doom peculiarly ſevere ſeems to be denounced againſt theſe *ſmiters* of their brethren[a]. What this may be, it is not our buſineſs now to examine, or to attempt to reveal the ſecrets of their deep. Within that place,

"How their audit ſtands, who knows ſave Heav'n?
But, in our circumſtance and courſe of thought,
'Tis heavy with them."

Ah! what avails it now to *Saul*, that he was once *among the prophets?* He and many more perceive now, from their own ſad experience, that the moſt ſhining gifts, without grace, can procure no man a paſsport to heaven.—Nabal now awakes from his lethargy, to find that although he had ſaved his goods, he hath loſt his ſoul; which

is

[a] Mat. xxiv. 49—51.

is now *empty and hath nothing*. His former excuſes for ſhutting up his bowels of compaſſion from the wants of his brother, can ſtand him in no ſtead now: For, no plea can excuſe the want of charity.—The penurious and inhoſpitable Nabal would not give *his bread, his water, and his fleſh, which he had provided for his ſhearers, to men whom he knew not whence they were.*—But was it not enough, Nabal, that thou kneweſt they were needy? And didſt thou not alſo know, that thy abundance was not thine, but only a ſtewardſhip to be now accounted for?—But thou wert afraid of miſplacing thy charity, becauſe there were many impoſtors; *many ſervants who ran away from their maſter* [a]. Alas! hadſt thou erred on the merciful ſide, and rather given to ten ſuch, than diſappoint one real object, thy account had this day been ſuſtained. The Judge would delight to ſhow ſuch mercy to thee as thou hadſt ſhown to others; and thy charity would have covered a multitude of ſins.

What

[a] 1 Sam. xxv. 10.

What ear does not *tingle* at hearing the terrible ſentence of the ſons of Eli [a]? All the children who proved wicked, in ſpite of the beſt precepts and example of their pious parents, ſtand around them in fearful expectation of the ſame doom.—Uzzah! why didſt thou touch with thy unhallowed hand the ark? Ah! I fear thy well-meant zeal can ſcarce excuſe thee, or can only do it *ſo as by fire*.—And why, Uzziah! didſt thou preſume to ſerve at the altar, when it did not appertain to thee? O that others had taken warning from your temporal puniſhment, not to meddle with holy things without being authoriſed, nor to thruſt themſelves into the ſanctuary without being called to its ſervice [b].

See how the treacherous are ranked with Ziba, near the *father of lies*; and the curſers and ſwearers ſhare the ſame fate with Shimei.—The counſel of the worldly-wiſe, though once conſidered *as the oracles of God*, is now turned to fooliſhneſs, like that of Achitophel; and the covetous ſee their ſen-

[a] 2 Sam. iii. 11. [b] 2 Chron. xxvi. 18.

tence in the eternal curſe that is ſtamped on Gehazi.—A doom, intolerable as that of Abſalom, alights upon thoſe ſouls that were unnatural and undutiful to their parents, or rebellious againſt any lawful authority; and all who plotted againſt the innocent, were but haſtening their own deſtruction, as did the proud and revengeful Haman.

Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy! is the beſt addreſs which Ahab can now make to GOD, as well as to Elijah[a].—And how dreadful, O Jezebel! is thy reckoning for the vineyard of Naboth, and for all thy abuſe of GOD's prophets!—The knees of Belſhazzar ſmote not againſt each other thus, when he ſaw the hand-writing upon the wall: And how bitterly does Hazael repent of his unlawful ambition!

See that hypocrite who pretended love to the Infant of Bethlehem; and ſee the thouſands more who made only a pretence to worſhip him[b]. Other ſinners ſeem to ſtand aloof from theſe, and tremble leſt they

[a] 1 Kings xxi. 20. [b] Mat. ii. 8.

they ſhould *have their portion with the hypocrites*.—So unſpeakably great was the love manifeſted by the Judge, eſpecially to thoſe who enjoyed the diſpenſation of his goſpel, that as many of them as did not in return *love him in ſincerity*, have now an *anathema maranatha* laid upon them above all others. The very devils, conſidering themſelves as leſs guilty, affect to ſhun them as monſters of ingratitude.

See Caiaphas in the agony of his pain, tearing now himſelf as formerly he did his garments; not becauſe he heard, but becauſe he ſpoke blaſphemy [a]! And ſee how the hand of Pilate, though waſhed in water, is ſtill red [b]! How earneſtly does Judas wiſh to get back to *his own place*, and to flee from the viſible preſence, though he cannot eſcape from the power, of the Judge! He ſees the twelve thrones, on one of which he might have ſat; and curſes again the thirty pieces of ſilver. *A goodly price* truly! But there are many around him who were tempted to ſell their ſouls and

[a] Mat. xxvi. 65. [b] Mat. xxvii. 24.

their intereſt in GOD and heaven for a ſtill meaner trifle. Fain would they now charge their guilt upon thoſe who had any hand in tempting them. But theſe, inſtead of ſo much as condoling with them, only inſult them in their miſery, ſaying, as the chief prieſts to Judas, *What is that to us, ſee thou to that.*

Curſed thirſt of gold! thou fruitful ſource of evil! how many owe to thee their inſupportable ſentence!—See an inſtance in that poor wretch, who *ſaid to gold, Thou art my hope; and to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence!* His SAVIOUR often knocked at his door in the guiſe of a poor brother. Through the iron bars of his window, he beheld him ſhivering; but his door was not unlocked. He beheld him naked and forlorn, his ſoul ready to fail for want of bread: But he did not draw forth his ſoul, or, what was the ſame, his gold, to help them. The voice of humanity cried, but he would not liſten. The goſpel told him, that his charity would be paid with unſpeakable intereſt; that his treaſure would

would be ſecure, where *thieves*, thoſe fiend s that haunted his daily thoughts and midnight dreams, could *never break through nor ſteal*; as alſo, that charity would ſoon eaſe him of that tax which "it irk'd him to pay to his own carcaſe," and give him the vaſt privilege to *hunger no more nor thirſt any more.* Charmed with this account of heaven, he half-ſtretched his hand to relieve his brother; but he turned it back to his boſom again, ſaying to him, *Depart, be thou warmed and be thou fed.*—The wandering orphan next lay down at his door; and breathed his ſighs in through his lattice. He bleſſed himſelf that it was not a thief or a robber; but turned away his eye, leſt, in ſpite of himſelf, his heart ſhould ſoften. He turned away his eye; but on the other ſide he ſpied

"The wretched widow forc'd in age, for bread,
To ſtrip the brook with mantling creſſes ſpread,
To pick her wint'ry faggot from the thorn,
Then ſeek ſome nightly ſhed, and weep till morn."

—He ſpied her: But his bowels, like his coffers, were locked up; and to *draw them out to the hungry*, all the arguments taken

from the conſideration of heaven or hell could not perſuade him. For, although his wealth might purchaſe a kingdom, he was afraid he might die a beggar. It is now manifeſt that he died worſe, and that he lived no better.

" Oh! curſed luſt of gold, when for thy ſake
The fool threw up his intereſt in both worlds,
Firſt ſtarv'd on earth, and now in judgment damn'd."

Nor are theſe wretches who made gold their idol, the only ſinners that are claſſed with Judas. Other ſinners, whoſe crimes were ſtill more enormous, have, with him, their portion. Mark, for inſtance, that ghaſtly figure, who, from pride, paſſion, and impatience of the rubs of life, had ruſhed into eternity uncalled, unſent for, and with bold intruſion thruſt himſelf forward to that dread tribunal before which he now trembles! If vengeance is taken on other ſinners *ſeven-fold*, on ſuch as this it ſhall be taken *ſeventy and ſeven*. —What!

" To ruſh into the preſence of his Judge;
As if he challeng'd him to do his worſt,
And matter'd not his wrath.—Unheard of tortures
Are reſerv'd for ſuch.—See! they herd together;

The

The common damned ſhun their company,
And look upon themſelves as fiends leſs foul.

Behold! the nine ungrateful lepers, who had once been amiſſing, are here found; but more than ever infected [a]. And what numbers are joined to them, of ſuch as were equally unthankful for temporal and ſpiritual deliverances and favours;—of ſuch as never thought of ſetting up a ſtone of remembrance when they paſſed through Jordan, or when GOD in any remarkable manner helped them!

That perſon who had done the Apoſtle *much evil*, is now *requited according to his work* [b]: And all thoſe have a ſhare in his fate, who by word or work obſtructed the uſefulneſs of GOD's ſervants, or threw a ſtumbling-block in the way of his people. It were better for ſuch, that a milſtone were hanged about their neck, and that they were drowned in the depth of the ſea.

Ah! ſee at what an awful diſtance from the kingdom of heaven ſtands now that *young man*, that hopeful youth, who was

[a] Luke xvii. 17. [b] 2 Tim. iv. 14.

once ſo near it. Angels almoſt weep for the ſad relapſe of one who had appeared in his youth ſo amiable, and who had ſo early raiſed their expectations. Now he *goes away* more ſorrowful than ever; for he hath loſt not only his GOD, but, what he valued more, his *large poſſeſſions*[a].—Thus, many a fair bloſſom, which had raiſed in men and angels the higheſt expectations, hath diſappointed the hopes of the harveſt; and lies, there, for ever blaſted!—Falſe and hollow world! how deadly were thy ſmiles, how dangerous were thy careſſes! How hard was it for any who loved thee, or were beloved by thee, to enter into the kingdom of heaven!—This, Demas, thou knoweſt. See, with what unſpeakable anguiſh the unhappy man looks over to that ſociety and bliſs, which, from his love to the periſhing world, he forſook and forfeited. And ſee, alas! what numbers there are around him who were equally fooliſh. Now they would give ten thouſand worlds, if they had them, in exchange for their ſouls.

[a] Mat. xix. 22.

ſouls.—But the redemption of the ſoul is precious; and, once loſt, is loſt for ever.

"Who would not give a trifle to prevent
What he would give a thouſand worlds to cure!"

Eaſy was the prevention of a loſs, ſo impoſſible now to repair. But men made light of grace, till the ſeaſon of grace was over. One was kept back by his attention to his oxen; another, by his attention to his farm; and a third, by the cares of his family, or by his regard to his relations; till the King who had invited them to his ſupper, was provoked to ſwear that none of them ſhould ever taſte of it[a].—Although the market-place ſtood long open, and all were called upon to *buy milk and wine without money and without price*; yet many, like the fooliſh virgins, ſlighted the calls of mercy, and ſlept away the ſeaſon of preparation, till the Bridegroom ſurpriſed them at unawares, and eternally excluded them from the heavenly entertainments.—Such was that neglecter of the

ſab-

[a] Luke xiv. 16.

ſabbath, and of all its worſhip and ordinances. How earneſtly does he now wiſh for one of the days of the Son of Man! How earneſtly does he wiſh to *run to and fro to ſeek the word of the Lord*, if he might but hope to find it! *O that thou hadſt known, even thou, in thy day, the things that belonged unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

But who is that who reſembles ſo much the *accuſer of the brethren?* Did we not once know him to be a reviler and backbiter, whoſe tongue fed on the venom of ſcandal; and who, inſtead of covering, excuſing, and alleviating the faults of his brother, expoſed, condemned, and magnified them exceedingly? Far from putting the beſt and moſt charitable conſtruction they could bear on his neighbour's words and actions, he always viewed them on the dark ſide, and ſearched for his foibles with more pleaſure than he did for his virtues. O! the confuſion in which he ſtands, when all his words are repeated before thoſe whoſe character he had injured; before men and angels,

angels, and before the Eternal Judge. Behind him ſtands the accuſing ſpirit, with that ſcroll in which he alſo had marked down his foul or falſe aſperſions.—Happy they, who, according to the law of love, made it their rule *to ſpeak evil of no man*, on any pretence, or on any provocation! *He that uttered ſlander was* indeed *a fool.*

Beſide this reviling and malicious diſturber of the peace of ſociety, behold that envious man, whoſe heart was grieved at the proſperity of his neighbours. How does he gnaw his lips when he now beholds their vaſt glory! What a torment is this ſight to him eſpecially, who was not only envious, but proud, and who looked down on the humble ſaint with contempt and ſcorn! O the anguiſh of Dives, when he lifts up his eye, and ſees Lazarus in Abraham's boſom!—and of Haman, when he ſees Mordecai ſo highly honoured! Yet ſtill greater is the puniſhment of ſpiritual pride, which leaſt of all became a guilty and polluted being. They who were puffed up with this fond conceit,

ceit, are now as far debaſed as they that humbled themſelves are exalted. How low art thou fallen by this crime, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning! And how low are all they fallen, who truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others! Mark that ſelf-righteous Phariſee, who once thanked GOD that he was not like other men, now reduced to a poor, loathſome, and naked ſpirit!—Vain man,

"'Tis all thou art, and all the proud ſhall be!"

But let us attend to thoſe whom the Judge next addreſſes. "Didſt not thou," he ſays to the firſt, "ſhut thy heart, thy hand, and thy home, againſt me, when I was poor, and ſick, and hungry, and naked? Did I not pine long beſide thee in a wretched hovel, unrelieved? and did I not ſtand at thy inclement door, expoſed to all the rigours of the ſky, unpitied?"—"And didſt not thou," to the next, "deprive me of the laſt morſel of bread which I had to ſupport myſelf and my family, and pluck

[a] Luke xviii. 11.

pluck from me even my laſt garment? Didſt thou not put me in priſon for the debt, which mercy, if not juſtice itſelf, ought to have forgiven; and force me and mine to wander through the world in queſt of a livelihood and a habitation? And didſt thou not conſume upon thy luſts that ſuperfluity which might have ſaved me from dying of poverty and a broken heart over my helpleſs orphans?" —"Lord, when ſaw we thee—[a]" "Behold the man whom you thus uſed: And were you not told in my Goſpel, that I accounted the good or evil done to any of my brethren as if it had been done to myſelf in perſon?"—The uncharitable wretch ſtands confounded and ſilent; and the mouth of the oppreſſive and hard-hearted extortioner is for ever ſhut.—But I think I hear the meek ſoul whom he injured beginning, as he approaches the throne with a holy familiarity, to pronounce that interceſſory and Chriſtian petition, to which his heart and his life were ſo long accuſtomed, "Lord, forgive—" But he ſtops in

[a] Mat. xxv. 44.

in the midſt; he remembers that the ſeaſon of interceſſion is for ever paſt, and that there is no longer any Advocate or Mediator.

"Did not you," continues the Judge to a third, "profeſs yourſelf a Chriſtian? Were you not baptized in my name? Did you not hear the threatenings of my law? Did you not hear the promiſes of my goſpel? Were you not allowed ſpace to repent; and did you not receive many warnings? Were not the remiſſion of your ſins, the aid of the Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven, all in your offer, long, though to no purpoſe? Did not I ſhed my blood to procure thee a title to ſalvation? But didſt thou not give a deaf ear to every call of love and mercy, neglect the means of grace, and trample under foot the blood of the covenant? Behold my hands and my feet bearing ſtill the marks of thoſe wounds which I endured when thou didſt *crucify me afreſh* by thy ſins [a]: And behold that cloud of witneſſes, of men, of angels, and of devils, all ready to bear teſtimony, that

[a] Heb. vi. 6.

that they oftener heard thee bid the Arch-enemy ſeize thee, or thy Maker damn thee, than they heard thy fervent prayer put up for pardon and ſalvation. And canſt thou ſay that thou art hardly dealt with, if now, at length, I grant thy requeſt, and ſuffer thy own mouth to judge thee, and thy own words to condemn thee? [a]"—The wretched creature is ſilent. His own conſcience had already pronounced upon him that ſentence to which the Judge is ſetting his eternal ſeal.

Ah! what a fearful meeting have thoſe now who had been inſtrumental in one another's ruin! See that perſon, who had once borne the office of a magiſtrate; and mark what a crowd ſurround him, to accuſe him of negligence in ſuppreſſing vice and immorality! For this, ſay they, was the ſource of our eternal miſery.—And ſee that head of a family, with his children and ſervants demanding vengeance upon him for his diſregard to their everlaſting welfare. *The ſon is* now *at variance with the father,*

[a] See Numb. xiv. 28.

father, and the daughter with the mother; and a man's worſt enemies are thoſe of his own houſehold. "Hadſt thou, by prayer, precept, and example, uſed thy diligence," cry his children, "our ſouls on this day might have been ſaved; for we were in thy hand as the clay in the hand of the potter."—"And we, we were almoſt the ſame," add they who had been his ſervants.—"Juſt GOD," exclaim both, "exact our ſouls at his hand."

But who comes forth next before the tribunal, to *render an account of himſelf to God?* Lo! it appears he is one who had been a labourer in the LORD's vineyard; and to whom the *Great Shepherd* had given it in charge to feed his ſheep till he ſhould come.—But, oh! how unlike thoſe thouſands of that office, whoſe ſentence we have been juſt now beholding! How unlike thoſe who, for the ſake of their flocks, *ſpent*, or even *laid down their lives*; and who, like Moſes and him of Tarſus, had ſuch ardent love to thoſe ſouls of whom they had the charge, that they could ſcarce

enjoy

enjoy ſalvation itſelf without their partaking of it, or bear to go in even to heaven without having them along with them [a]. A faithful band! who, with their ſweat, their tears, and their blood, watered that vineyard which was purchaſed by the precious blood of the SON OF GOD; riſing early, and late taking reſt, that they might cultivate the ſoil, and leave it more improved to thoſe who ſhould ſucceed them.—Such were they. But ah! how unlike them was this whom we now behold! One who ſlept or fled while the wolf made his attack on the fold; who took his eaſe, and ate and drank in the vineyard of his Maſter: One who ſuffered the weeds to ſpread, the true plants to run wild and decay, and the enemy to break through its fences.—I ſee his guardian angel draw a veil over his face, to cover the laſt bluſh, and the laſt tear, which the unworthy conduct of his charge forces from that benevolent being. I hear the Judge, with marks of uncommon diſpleaſure in his countenance,

[a] Exod. xxii. 32. & Rom. ix. 3.

aſk, "Was it thus thou didſt diſcharge ſo great a truſt? Was this thy care of that vineyard which coſt me my blood, and for which I poured out, on the croſs, my ſoul:"—"And on the improvement of which," add a thouſand faithful ſtewards, "we expended our labours and our lives, before it was intruſted with thee?" See, he attempts ſome excuſe. But a vaſt crowd of thoſe ſouls over whom he had the charge, gather around him. Their united cries aſcend, in loud peals, in the ear of the LORD of Hoſts. "Require," they cry, "require, O GOD, our ſouls at his hand: *the blood of our ſouls ſhall be found in his ſkirts*[a]." He offers again to ſpeak; and their redoubled cries again aſcend. But ſhut, ſhut the dreadful ſcene. Even to ſee and hear theſe things, without feeling them, is intolerably painful.—Avert from thy ſervant, O GOD! ſo inſupportable a ſentence!

§ 4.

[a] Jer. ii. 34.

§ 4. To haſten from a proſpect ſo big with unutterable wo, let us take a brief view of the final iſſues of the laſt judgment.

See, then, all the rational univerſe divided into two bands, after their characters have been ſingly and minutely inveſtigated. And ſee the impaſſable and eternal line of ſeparation drawn between them. See, on the one ſide, every fallen angel, and every wicked being of the human race, all waiting to receive their laſt and general doom, after each hath already received his particular ſentence. See among them thoſe who laughed at hell as an idle fable, now trembling to find it a fearful reality, as they ſee it opening its mouth to receive them, and *moved from beneath to meet them.* And ſee thoſe who were advocates for annihilation, ſeized with aſtoniſhing horror, when they find, that even this laſt and dreadful reſource is about to be denied them. They aſk it, however, with intenſe earneſtneſs, either now, or, if that may not be, at any period however di-

ſtant. For, lo! one like a deputed ſupplicant, comes out from among them. A deputed ſupplicant he is; what can be his ſuit?—"O, in the name of all my unhappy brethren, put us once more in a ſtate of probation for eternity; or let us, O let us drop into nothing!"—"It cannot be", returns the Judge.—"O move it to thy Father!" "—For the firſt time, I refuſe ſuch a petition." The unhappy wretch returns[a].—O that he and that multitude around him had prayed as earneſtly for mercy in the ſeaſon of mercy! Then might they have ſtood, on this day, among the happy number on the other ſide. But now the things that ſhould have made for their peace, are for ever hid from their eyes. The mediatorial hour is paſt, and the day of grace is over. Their ſentence comes. It appears, painted in awful terrors, in the face of the Judge. But theſe terrors ſeem mingled with ſymptoms of pity, now that he muſt condemn even thoſe who would not be ſaved. In his face, one thinks there appears ſome-

[a] See Grigg's Sermon on the Judgment.

ſomething like thoſe tears which he once ſhed over the devoted city [a]. Methinks I ſee the damp ſpread over the face of every holy being, of human or angelic order, around him; whilſt the words break, as it were with reluctance, from his lips: DEPART *from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire*—

Scarce is the ſentence pronounced, when hell yawns horribly, with dreadful thunderings, below them*. Every ray of light from without, and of hope from within, is withdrawn from them; and darkneſs ten thouſand fold, ſurcharged with livid lightnings, ſurrounds them; as, inſtantly, they ſink into the pit without bottom. The laſt of that miſerable crowd is out of ſight; and thoſe priſon-gates are ſhut, which ſhall never more be opened: for the debt will never be paid, although they ſhould be paying it to all eternity. A ſtronger

[a] Luke xix. 41.

*——on a ſudden, open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring ſound
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harſh thunder. MILTON, B. II.

guard than the cherubim which guarded the way of the tree of life at Eden, is placed upon the door: For it is barred with the eternal DECREE of GOD.

I ſee ſomething of a cloud ſtill ſpread on the face of all the heirs of heaven, and their very ſilence and aſtoniſhment ſpeaking, as one ſhould think, in this or ſome ſuch language: "O Father of all Spirits! is there no ranſom, no releaſe any more, for that unhappy multitude! Is there no further myſtery to be revealed, no mediator in the heavenly decrees to ſave them, although an eternity of eternities ſhould roll, before this jubilee, for which the whole creation could almoſt bear again to groan, ſhould come to paſs! Muſt they remain, for ever, the eternal monuments of their own folly, and of thy juſt diſpleaſure? Muſt they remain a warning to the reſt of the univerſe, and to a thouſand univerſes yet unborn, of the dreadful nature of ſin, and of the fearfulneſs of the wrath of GOD! But if this be thy holy will, as we know, for the

general

general good, it is--Amen! let thy will be done! Should the word of thy threatening fail, the pillars of heaven would tremble, and all its inhabitants, from the loweſt ſaint to the archangel Michael, be alarmed; leſt the word of thy promiſe ſhould fail alſo. Thy will therefore, O GOD, be done; for juſt and true are all thy judgments. Allelujah!"

Now all is joy, all is ecſtaſy! JESUS ſees the vaſt and bleſſed fruits of the travail of his ſoul, and is unſpeakably glad. Every other countenance reflects the ſacred joy; and for this one firſt gleam of the beatific viſion, (ſo unſpeakable is the bliſs of ſeeing the face of a reconciled GOD!) the ſaint who ſuffered the moſt in all the bleſſed number, thinks all his ſervices and ſufferings already more than recompenſed. But how inconceivable is their gladneſs, when they conſider, that they are to enjoy this happineſs to all eternity; and that no cloud, for one moment, ſhall ever obſcure or intercept the light of their GOD and of their SAVIOUR's countenance! Their out-

ward glory is ſcarce equal to their inward gladneſs; although their robes are fairer than the light, and their crowns brighter than ever was the ſun in his meridian ſplendour. In every reſpect, they ſtand confeſſedly the ſons of GOD, and the heirs of immortality; waiting in bliſsful expectation for thoſe words which ſhall ſtamp an eternal ſeal on their felicity. With unſpeakable complacency their LORD pronounces them:—"COME, *ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

Immediately the glorious choirs, through all their orders, ſtrike up that heavenly muſic, which could he but hear who was ſo charmed with only the earthly harp of one of them [a], it would make him almoſt change his nature and be an angel of light again. The very *waſte places of Zion are now as Eden, and her deſarts as the garden of God; joy and gladneſs are found therein, thankſgiving and the voice of melody* [b]. Hark!

"All

[a] 1 Sam. xvi. 23. [b] Iſa. li. 3.

" All heaven rings
With jubilee; and loud hoſannahs fill
Th' eternal regions."

The children of redemption, through all their myriads, raiſe their glad voices, and ſhout forth, *Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!* whilſt all the angelic hoſts, the *morning-ſtars* of the creation, ſing with higher joy than they did at the birth of nature, and echo with a loud and glad reſponſe to the ſong of their younger brethren, *Amen! Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen*[a]*!*

Jesus now delivers up the mediatorial *kingdom to God, even the father;* ſaying, as once before, *Father, I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do: Thoſe thou gaveſt me, I have kept, and none of them is loſt. And now, Father, I will that they be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory; and that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us*[b].

With

[a] Rev. vii. 10, 12. [b] John xvii.

With the ſame voice that ſpoke once above Jordan, the FATHER repeats his approbation of the conduct of his SON, in whom he is always well pleaſed. He ſets his ſeal to the tranſactions of the Great Day: And in anſwer to the requeſt of him whom he always heareth, lets down the NEW JERUSALEM to meet her inhabitants; prepared for them as a bride adorned for her huſband. The everlaſting gates lift up their heads, and diſcloſe that eternal day, whoſe light to any but the heirs of glory, would be conſuming and intolerable. *The King of glory enters in*, and all the ſons of GOD with him. They are all preſented blameleſs before the throne of the Father, with exceeding joy. They are all arrayed in the white robes of the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, with which their ſouls were inveſted by the Holy Spirit, whoſe office it was thus to ſanctify and prepare them. In this *wedding-garment* they are all received, as meet and welcome gueſts, to that marriage-ſupper which the KING of Heaven hath prepared for his SON. To each

each he gives the ſalutation of a friend, as he uſhers him in to the joy of his LORD.

The laſt act of the mediatorial office of JESUS is now over; and he concludes it with *laying down all the authority and power* with which that office, now no longer neceſſary, had inveſted him.—And now GOD is ALL in *all*[a]. A relation, a union, commences between Him and his people, which———But to this, not all the ideas, not all the language of Paradiſe, can be true. See, how all the myriads, who are now adopted to this relation, are beyond expreſſion glad. And even to thoſe who have longeſt enjoyed it, it is ſtill new. Filled with that ecſtatic bliſs which it inſpires, lo! all the united hoſts, of all the united hierarchies of the innumerable heavens in the higheſt, ſhout forth Hallelujahs, like the voice of many thunders, or the ſound of many waters, ſaying, ALLELUIAH!

[a] 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

LUIAH! *for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!*
AMEN! ALLELUIAH[a]!

CHAP. V.

A Review of the laſt Judgment; or, Some Reflections and Improvements on the preceding Chapters.

§ 1. Improvement—of the certainty of the Judgment; and—of the diſſolution of the World. § 2.—Of the reſurrection and eternal ſeparation of the good and bad. § 3.—Of JESUS being the Judge. § 4.—Of the minuteneſs; and, § 5.—Of the impartiality of the Judgment. § 6.—Of the view of the multitudes on the right and on the left hand of the Judge. § 7.—Of the reaſons for which a general judgment may have been appointed, and revealed to us. § 8. The concluſion.

§ 1. HAVING taken a view of ſo many of the grand and awful ſolemnities that are to accompany the laſt Judgment, it will now be proper that we retire

[a] A wider view of the conſequences of the Judgment, in a ſtate of happineſs and miſery, was meant to be given here; but is for the preſent laid aſide, as it would extend this diſcourſe to too great a length.

tire into our own thoughts, and conſider what improvement we ought to make of ſo important a ſubject. Hitherto we have in a manner ſtood as only ſpectators of the ſcene. Now it is time to conſider that we are more nearly intereſted in it: that every one of us *there* ſhall be called; *there* ſtand; and *there*, by an irreverſible decree, be judged. And can we think of theſe things without aſking our hearts, What manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs, whilſt we look for theſe things, and hurry on to meet them, as faſt as the wings of time can carry us forward? Should not the Judgment always dwell in our thoughts; lie down with us, riſe up with us, go abroad with us, and come home with us? Should not we night and day be preparing for it, and ſtanding always with our loins girt about, and our lamps trimmed and ready; not knowing in what ſudden and unexpected moment we may be ſummoned, perhaps, by a midnight call, to appear before the tribunal? Should we not, as the Judge him-

himſelf hath directed [a], *watch and pray always*, that we may be able to meet the terrors of that day, and to ſtand with a holy confidence before the SON OF MAN at his appearing? This is the great improvement which we ought to make of this awful ſubject, whoſe ſolemnities are for this purpoſe ſo clearly revealed to us. But let us take a more particular review of thoſe great ſcenes which we have been juſt now beholding.

We have ſeen, that there is a day appointed in the decrees of GOD for an univerſal judgment. This day can, therefore, no more fail to come to paſs, than GOD can fail to be. We may forget it, becauſe we may think it diſtant: Or we may diſbelieve it, becauſe it is ſo long delayed; and aſk with the ſcoffers of old, *Where is the promiſe of his coming* [b]? But the counſel of the LORD ſhall ſtand; and who ſhall diſannul his purpoſe? In that appointed ſeaſon, the knowledge of which he hath reſerved to himſelf, and hid from every

[a] Luke xxi. 36. [b] 2 Pet. iii. 4.

every created intelligence, he will come. But whether to-morrow or ſome thouſand years hence, we know not. The certainty of the event, and the uncertainty of the time, ſhould powerfully excite us to uſe all poſſible diſpatch and diligence to put ourſelves in a prepared poſture for meeting ſo awful a period. In the morning, we ſhould think, that the judgment, or death, which is to us the ſame, may ere evening overtake us; and in the evening, that the laſt trumpet may awake us before the morning. Let none imagine that ſuch thoughts would be productive of any ſullen gloom or dejection of ſpirit. On the contrary, they would produce, in every virtuous mind, that calm and cheerful reſignation to the will of GOD, and that conſtant intercourſe of ſoul with the Father of our ſpirits, which is the true ſource of all ſelf-enjoyment here, as well as the beſt preparation for reliſhing the heavenly felicity. Such a diſtruſt of the future would not only be a ſtrong reſtraint from ill, but alſo the moſt powerful inducement to crowd into our ſhort ſpan as much

much good as poſſible, uncertain how ſuddenly and ſoon all our opportunities may be ſnatched away from us. In a word, this conſtant looking out for death and judgment would excite us to an early and ſincere repentance, of which the immediate conſequences would be no leſs ſalutary to ſociety than to ourſelves. It would engage us, as faſt as poſſible, to make our calling and election ſure; and to ſtand every moment on the watch, with our wings as it were expanded, ready to ſpring forth at the firſt notice of the coming of our LORD. *Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom their Maſter, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing!*

We have heard the unſpeakably terrible ſolemnities with which the judgment-day ſhall be uſhered in. Should not that lead us to examine our hearts, and know how we are likely to be affected when thoſe things ſhall be really ſeen by us? Should it not lead us to examine whether we have built our houſe, our hope of ſalvation, upon ſuch a rock as ſhall ſtand firm, when

the

the pillars of the earth ſhall be ſhaken, and its foundation ſwept away, as ſand by a flood of waters [a]? If the world, with all its tranſient vanities, ſhall be burnt like ſtubble, why do we not contemn it, raiſe our thoughts above it, and fix them upon ſomething more valuable and laſting? Did we frequently contemplate the world ſinking down into its aſhes, it would ſurely diſengage our affections from it, moderate our love to it, and blunt the edge of every temptation with which it would attack us. The world, could we gain it all, would be no equivalent for the loſs of the immortal ſpirit, which ſhall one day ſurvive its ruins.—The world!—What is it? An atom on which the ſoul pauſes, or rather the body vegetates, for a few moments; and then, adieu to it for ever! Yet man, prepoſterous man! is ready to view this atom as a world, whilſt he views other worlds as atoms. A little ſparkling gem, or a few grains of yellow duſt, excite his admiration, and affect him with their loſs; whilſt he beholds without emotion, as if

[a] Mat. vii. 24.

it were but the ſhooting of a ſtar, or the wavering of a meteor, the periſhing of a diſtant ſun, that may bring along with it the ruin of a ſyſtem [a]. Nay, heaven itſelf is frequently poſtponed, in his affections, to the moſt trifling vanity of earth and time. For the preſent pleaſures of a moment, in ſpite of conviction, he often forfeits the happineſs of ten thouſand ages, in a futurity which cannot be called diſtant. I bluſh for myſelf, and for my fellow-immortals, when I conſider how much this world infatuates us, in ſpite of all our boaſted reaſon. Though denizens of eternity, we act as if we had in time *a fixed city*. But ſhall not that view which we have had of the world dying in its aſhes, break the charm and diſſolve the inchantment? Shall not the ſoul, for ſhame, bethink itſelf, and awake to a conſciouſneſs of its dignity and immortal nature? How ſhould we ſcorn every ignoble paſſion and purſuit, and ſpurn at this world's pitiful temptations, when we conſider that we

[a] Buffon.

we ſhall one day hear the trump of GOD knelling it and the ſurrounding creation to their tomb; that we ſhall ſee theſe heavens paſs away with a great noiſe; this elemental fabric totter on its aged pillars, and, like an old ruin, tumble into ſhapeleſs rubbiſh? That we ſhall ſee theſe ſtars fall from their orbits, and this ſun extinguiſh like a candle in its ſocket; that we ſhall ſee *the earth reel to and fro like a drunkard*, and theſe blue-ſpangled curtains that cover it, rolled, like a ſhrivelled ſcroll, together? How ſhould our ſouls, thoſe ſparks vouchſafed us of the Divinity, be elevated above all ſublunary trifles, and aſpire to the region of congenial ſpirits, when we conſider that every thing here falls ſo much ſhort of them both in dignity and duration; and that in ſome future, and not diſtant, period, we ſhall view this world, as does a traveller the ruin of ſome mighty Babylon, over which he walks, and can ſcarce trace out the marks of its exiſtence? Yes, we ſhall hereafter view the place

"Where once creation ſtood and conſtellations ſhone,'

as ſome curious antiquary views, perhaps even now, the remains of old Rome, Perſepolis, Palmyra, or ſome ſuch ancient city. Here," if he is ſo happy as to diſcern the evidence of a few ſculptured fragments of an arch or pillar, " here," he will ſay, " ſtood the Pantheon; here the palace of the Cæſars; here the ſenate-houſe where Cicero ſpoke; and here the theatre where raviſhed thouſands liſtened:" Similar to this, if we may compare great things with ſmall, may one day be the language of our world-ſurveying ſpirits. " Here," we may ſay, " the foundations of the old world were laid; here the heavens were ſpread; here the ſun had his tabernacle, and here the moon her pavilion. And there, beneath us, the ſpot where firſt we breathed; the place where our infant-ſtate, too thoughtleſs of future worlds, ' purſued on the brink of precipices the flying feather;' and where millions ſtrove, amidſt the ſwelling floods, about a bubble! Unaccountable infatuation! that ever we ſhould have thought ſo much of a place where

where our date was but a moment, and our ſpace a ſpan!" Aſtoniſhing indifference about our eternal ſtate, when we allowed it for one moment to quit our thoughts, which could even then

——thus wander through Eternity!"

Such, when earth and time, and ſun and moon, ſhall fail, may be the language of our never-dying ſpirits. And ſhall ſuch ſpirits think of taking up their reſt in this world, and contenting themſelves with a ſhadow or a dream inſtead of real felicity? *To eat and drink, and riſe up to play;* to ſleep till our exhauſted nature is refreſhed, and our diſſipated ſpirits recruited, and then run the ſame dull circle, and fall to weaving the ſame cobweb of vanity again; this may ſuit the periſhing nature of a brute, but is not, cannot be, the proper employment of an immortal and ſpitual being. Let us, then, raiſe our thoughts above the poor gratifications of a place which is not our home, but our place of exile, and our priſon. Let us, by a lively faith in our Father's promiſes, anticipate thoſe higher

joys which we now look for. Let us earneſtly implore the ſanctifying influences of the Divine Spirit; and daily grow in meetneſs for the bleſſed ſociety of kindred angelic beings, by conforming ourſelves as far as poſſible to the laws of the angelic kingdom. Our preſent habitation, and our preſent exiſtence, are valuable only ſo far as they forward the grand ſcheme of the goſpel, and qualify us for a place and a being inconceivably higher. To this end, then, let us take care that the world and every thing in it ſhall always be ſubſervient; and let us not ſuffer our ſouls to reſt ſatisfied with any happineſs ſhort of being inhabitants of that everlaſting city, and members of that ever-bleſſed ſociety of which the Head is GOD. Poor is that felicity which grows any where without the walls of Paradiſe; and low is that ambition which ſtoops to any thing beneath the ſkies.

§ 2. WE have been viewing that diſtinguiſhing and peculiar doctrine of Chriſtianity,

ſtanity, the reſurrection of the body. How thankful ſhould we be for the goſpel which kindles in our breaſt the joyful expecta-tion of a period in which this event ſhall aſſuredly take place! Before this glorious diſcovery was made to the world, all the generations of men, except pethaps a few ſaints of the Jewiſh church, ſunk into the ſilent tomb in ſadneſs, without knowing what was to become of them. Good men might wiſh, and wiſe men expect, a life to come. But thoſe wiſhes and thoſe expecta-tions were mixt with many doubts and miſ-givings. All their reaſonings about a fu-ture ſtate were crude, groſs, and indigeſted. Death was a deep gulph of which they ſaw only the entrance: Or if the trembling ſoul could dimly deſcry, beyond that gulph, a diſtant ſhore, where it hoped for exiſtence among kindred intellectual ſpirits; yet could ſhe never dream that her dear companion, the body, ſhould recover from the ruin and diſhonour of the tomb. Accordingly, the laſt mournful ſolemn words of the ſur-viving friends, when they looked back on

the funeral pile, after paying the laſt duty to the lifeleſs clay, were, " Farewell, eternally farewell!" This rendered death indeed a king of terrors. But ſince CHRIST, who is the firſt-fruits and pledge of the general reſurrection, and, by a ſtrong figure of ſpeech, the reſurrection itſelf, is riſen, this once formidable enemy is ſtript of all his terrors, and lies at our feet vanquiſhed and diſarmed. The Chriſtian can now adopt the language of ancient prophecy, and ſay, *O death, I will be thy plagues.* In the awful moment of his departure, he can ſing with ſaint Paul, *O death, where is thy ſting? and where, O grave, is thy victory*[a]? The believer does not now behold Heaven, as Balaam did the MESIAH, afar off? nor as Moſes did the land of Canaan, to which he might not enter; but, like the dying Stephen, he ſees it nigh, and open to receive him. This makes him enter the dark vale undaunted, and walk in the ſhadow of death undiſmayed. For he hears the voice of HIM who conquered death and the

[a] 1 Cor. xv. 55.

the grave ſaying unto him, *Fear not; I am he that was dead and is alive, and live for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death*[a]. The ſad ſurvivor too, knowing that the hour is coming in which they that are in their graves ſhall hear the voice of the SON of GOD and live, can more cheerfully reſign the friend that was unto him as his own ſoul. Supported by the pleaſing hope which the proſpect of a reſurrection-day inſpires, he feels, amidſt the tears which nature ſheds, a kind of mournful joy, as he takes the laſt farewell of his deareſt relative. Along with the burſt of grief, he can now give vent to the voice of faith:

Adieu, dear ſaint, until we meet again,
Where cruel Death ſhall ſever friends no more;
Tho' ſtorms divide us on this ocean now,
We ſoon ſhall meet on yonder happy ſhore!

We have further ſeen the difference, the unſpeakable difference, between the reſurrection of the juſt and of the unjuſt. *Bleſſed are all they who have part in the firſt*

[a] Rev. i. 17, 18

reſurrection! Who would not wiſh to be in the number! But idle wiſhes are of no avail. The moſt earneſt endeavours to paſs from the death of ſin to a life of holineſs are neceſſary, before we can reaſonably hope for ſuch happineſs. They only who are thus earneſt can expect the aid of the Divine Spirit in this world, or the comfort of beholding the face of JESUS, without diſmay, when this world is over. Should we not therefore ſtrive, like perſons in an agony, till we have found ourſelves *paſſed from death unto life*, and diſcovered in our ſanctification the beſt evidence of our ſalvation being made ſure. Let me but diſcover this evidence in my heart and life, and no angel needs come to tell me that he hath ſeen my name in the LAMB's book of life.

The difference between the reſurrection of the good and the bad, ſhould teach us to turn our attention more to that great quality which will diſtinguiſh one man from another in eternity. Inſtead of being for ever dazzled with the little diſtinc-

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tions of this life, and computing mens happineſs according to their ſtations, which is as abſurd as if we ſhould calculate the enjoyment of an inſect from the colour of its wings, let us learn to make piety and virtue the ſole objects of our admiration and ambition. All the momentary diſtinctions of riches and of grandeur will ſoon vaniſh and be no more; whilſt holineſs will dignify its poſſeſſors with an eternal nobility. The laſt day may bring about ſuch a reverſe of fortunes, that the mighty lord who now looks down with ſcorn upon the poor but pious beggar on the dung-hill, *whom he would have diſdained to ſet with the dogs of his flock*[a], muſt then, if he would ſee him, caſt his eye upwards, and look for him among archangels. GOD only knows who are rich and who are poor till the accounts are finally balanced before the great tribunal. Many of the *kings of the earth, and captains*, and ſuch as we call *great and rich men*, will then be ſo aſhamed of their ſoul's poverty, that they will

[a] Job xxx. 1.

will ſeek to hide themſelves in dens, and pray to the rocks to cover them [a]; while the loweſt poor, who *cut up mallows by the buſhes, and juniper roots for their meat* [b], ſhall, if they were rich in grace, ſoar with joy to meet their LORD, and exchange the doleful cry of *How long?* into the glad ſong of *Behold he cometh!*—" O keep me innocent, my GOD! make others great."

We have ſeen that the firſt and grand, though not the ſole inquiry on the judgment-day, ſhall turn upon what good works have been performed by us, as the fruit and conſequence of that faith which we profeſſed as Chriſtians. This ſhould frequently lead our thoughts to inquire, according to the queſtions then propoſed [c], whether or not we have this evidence of our ſalvation being ſure. For, although negative goodneſs may ſecure us from the judicial laws of men, it will by no means ſave us from being condemned by GOD, if he himſelf hath endowed us with the ability of doing poſitive good. The bare

[a] Rev. vi. 15, 16. [b] Job xxx. 4. [c] Page 60—62.

bare neglect of duty is enough to caſt us, though it may not perhaps ſink us ſo deep in hell as thoſe who had been poſitively wicked. The barren fig-tree is accurſed [a]; the unfruitful tree in the vineyard is condemned [b]; the virgins who neglected to procure oil, are excluded from the feaſt; and the ſervant who only laid up his talent in a napkin, is *caſt into outer darkneſs* [c]. How ſhould theſe conſiderations engage us not to be barren or unfruitful in the work of the LORD; eſpecially as we know that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the LORD on that day?

And if the rewards, as we have ſeen, ſhall be diſtributed in proportion to the improvement of our talents, and the degrees of happineſs be correſpondent to the degrees of holineſs, which may be called the capacity for happineſs;—then, why not zealouſly exert ourſelves to advance as much as poſſible in holineſs, while our ſeaſon of improvement ſhall continue? Why

[a] Mat. xxi. 19. [b] Luke xiii. 7.
[c] Mat. xxv. 30.

Why not have the ſacred ambition to aſpire to ſomething more than the very loweſt ſeat in the ſcale of glory? And, indeed, if we do not aim as high as we poſſibly can, there is the greateſt danger we may altogether fall ſhort of the mark, and loſe the prize. The bare poſſibility of ſo dreadful a riſk, is enough to alarm the wife. I could bear the thoughts of any diſappointment on earth, or of any miſery that is circumſcribed by time; but every atom of the body trembles as the leaf, and the ſoul to her very centre ſtartles, at the apprehenſion of loſing heaven, or of incurring a pain that is eternal.—Tear me not, O my GOD, from JESUS, the ſole pillar of my truſt; and remove, if thou wilt, every other ſupport. Bid my hope of heaven bloſſom as the roſe; and blaſt, if ſuch is thy pleaſure, every earthly comfort! For, *although the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flocks ſhall be cut off from the folds, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls;*

yet

yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation[a] *!*

When we ſaw others give up their accounts, it was natural for us to conſider, How ſtood our own? Eſpecially when we ſaw the multitudes of angels and of men divided to the right-hand and to the left by the Judge, *as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats*, were not our hearts full of anxiety to know on which ſide we ourſelves ſhould ſtand?—Here, then, let our ſouls make a ſolemn pauſe, before we ſhall have loſt ſight of the judgment, and examine, with ſolicitude, to which party we belong; that, if we have not done it already, we may immediately fly to the ſide of ſafety.—If you would decide this important queſtion, then, aſk conſcience; examine your heart and conduct; compare theſe with that rule of life which is given by GOD; and pray for the aſſiſtance of the All-knowing and Heart-ſearching SPIRIT. This done frequently and carefully,

[a] Hab. iii. 17, 18.

fully, you can ſcarce be miſtaken in your opinion.

On the one ſide ſhall ſtand they who endeavour, with conſtancy and ſincerity, to do the whole will of GOD; not chooſing one commandment and refuſing another: —They who do not ſhun the hardeſt duty, though they might do it without either the knowledge or cenſure of men; and who would not, wilfully and deliberately, turn off from the ſtraight path, either to the right-hand or to the left, although the world ſhould ſpread all its profits, pleaſures, and honours, to tempt them; and though ſhame, poverty, pain, and even death, ſhould ſtand ready to encounter them in the way which they hold:—They who, like faithful ſoldiers, follow the Captain of their ſalvation *through bad report and good report*, through active obedience and painful ſufferings; who maintain, in all their ways, a conſtant intercourſe with GOD; bowing their knee to him every morning, and commending their ſouls to him every night:—They who do all the good they

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can to the ſouls and bodies of their fellow-travellers through the world, giving one of their two coats to ſuch as have none, and a ſhare of that bread and water which they have for their own journey, to ſuch as have nothing:—They who travel with their heart and their eye looking always beyond this world, and reaching to another; and who are ſo animated by the glory which is there ſet before them, and ſo conſtrained by the love of JESUS, as to preſs earneſtly forward towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.—Hark, how they encourage one another to go on and perſevere.—"Behold that crown! it is purchaſed for us by the blood of the LAMB; and by the blood of the LAMB we ſhall overcome every difficulty, and obtain it!"

Such is the general character of thoſe whom we have ſeen on the right-hand of the JUDGE, and who ſhall aſſuredly ſtand there. May not each of us know, without much trouble, whether it may be his own?—Or is there any who hath reaſon to

apprehend that he may be caſt rather to the other ſide? Let us recollect what are the characters of thoſe who ſhall ſtand there. *There*, ſhall ſtand all they who habitually neglect their duty to GOD or man, and who command not their own irregular paſſions: They who are *fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable;* who walk in the right path only when it ſuits their convenience, their profit, or their pleaſure; but who forſake it, whenever it turns dark, dangerous, or difficult; and, in compliance with ſome temptations that court them, baſely deſert their duty, and betray their SAVIOUR. *There*, ſhall ſtand they who have GOD but ſeldom in their thoughts; who ſeek not his guidance in the morning, nor implore, in the evening, the protection of HIM who hath the keys of hell and of death: They who, careful only for themſelves, ſtudy not what they may do to comfort or relieve any of the reſt of mankind; who, if themſelves are well clothed *and fare ſumptuouſly*, care not if the widow mourn, if the orphan want, or if

Lazarus

Lazarus lie at the door, hungry, naked, and deſtitute. *There*, ſhall ſtand they who oftener look around to ſee what this world can give them, than they look forward, with the eye of faith, to the glory of the other [a]; who make light of means and ordinances, ſabbaths and ſacraments; who neglect the reading and hearing of the word of GOD; who deſpiſe prayer, praiſe, and meditation; and who delay, from time to time, the adjuſting of their accounts for the judgment, till at length the angel of Death, at an hour when they do not look for him, ſummons them to their LORD's tribunal.

Such are the general characters of thoſe who ſhall ſtand on the left-hand of the Judge. Is there any who clearly ſees, or is even doubtful, whether any of them may not point out himſelf, and ſay to him, *Thou art the man?*—If there is, let me charge thee, immortal ſoul! by that awful obteſtation of the Apoſtle, *by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead,*

[a] Pſ. iv. 6.

and you and me, *at his appearing*, to gird up the loins of thy mind, and to prepare thyſelf inſtantly for his coming. Let me charge thee to attend to that ſolemn admonition of the preaching angel, to *fear God, and give glory to him, as the hour of his judgment is*, as it were already, *come*[a]. Change immediately thy conduct; ſleep no longer on the brink of a yielding precipice; linger not within the precincts of deſtruction, but flee with thy life to the mountains of ſafety. Be diligent, while there is yet room for diligence; provide a covert from the ſtorm, while it is yet a few moments ſuſpended; *and give neither ſleep to thine eye, nor ſlumber to thine eye-lid*, until thou haſt ſecured an intereſt in JESUS, *and made thy calling and election ſure*. For the whole world, with all its profits, pleaſures, and honours, ſell not thy ſoul; loſe not thy crown; forfeit not thy heaven. Reſolve upon giving thy noble chance, at leaſt, one fair trial; and, depend upon it, that reſolution ſhall be victory.

[a] Rev. xiv. 7.

tory. Fear not the difficulty of thy duty. GOD, in order to roll that ſtone away, will ſend his angel before thee, as he did to the pious female diſciples[a]. Startle not at any forbidding gloom which thou mayeſt apprehend to hang over the ways of religion; for there is no ſuch thing. *Her ways are* altogether *ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*[b]. They appear otherwiſe only to the eye which views them afar off; juſt as the moſt beautiful landſcape ſeems to be loſt in clouds of miſt, when viewed at an undue diſtance. The nearer you approach, it ſmiles the brighter. For, *the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Or, ſhouldſt thou be apt to be diſcouraged with thy own weakneſs, remember that thy Helper is all-ſufficient. His bare word can give to the *withered arm* ſtrength; and it can give not only to the *ſick*, but to the *dead*, the power to *riſe up and walk*. To every believing and willing ſoul, the command of JESUS brings

[a] Mar. xvi. 3. & Mat. xxviii. 2. [b] Prov. iii. 17.

the power of compliance along with it. Truſt, then, in the mercy of GOD, in the blood of the LAMB, and in the aid of the SPIRIT. Only *ariſe and be doing, and the Lord* ſhall *be with thee* [a].—But remember that the leaſt delay in a matter of ſuch moment, is the height of madneſs; and that the conſequence may poſſibly be eternal ruin. For,

" There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood, leads on to *heav'n:*
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in ſhallows and in miſeries.
On ſuch a full ſea are we now afloat,
And we muſt take the current when it ſerves,
Or loſe our ventures."

§ 3. IT muſt have given us joy to ſee that the judgment of the Great Day was committed to CHRIST JESUS. If the Supreme DEITY, in all his unveiled glory, were to judge us immediately, we ſhould be confounded and aſtoniſhed at the majeſty of his preſence. We could not ſtand before his flaming throne, nor behold the daz-

[a] 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

dazzling beams of his glory. This glory is therefore allayed, by the veil of human nature interposing in the person of JESUS CHRIST. Nay, to remove all unnecessary terror, and even encourage our approaches, it is our Brother and Friend, who loved us and who died for us, that is to be our final Judge. He hath the same compassion as when he wept over an obstinate city [a]; and the same love as when he bled and died for a guilty world. He knows the strength of our temptations, and the weakness of our natures, and will make allowances for both; so that the sincere believer may cheerfully come before his throne, relying on his mercy.—Were the choice left to ourselves, surely of all in heaven or on earth, he should be the person into whose hands we would wish to commit the judgment. As GOD, he is omnipotent, omniscient, and just; the Creator and Governor of all spirits; therefore infinitely better qualified for this office, than all the angels of heaven, assisted by all the

[a] Luke xix. 41.

wiſeſt and beſt of created beings throughout the univerſe. As Man, again, he hath a fellow-feeling with all the infirmities of our nature; which, ſo far as they were ſinleſs, he hath felt in his own perſon. And as the SAVIOUR of men, we have infinitely more mercy to expect from him, after having given ſuch evidence of his love as to die for us, than from the moſt benevolent of men and angels, were they appointed to be our judges. So merciful, that if the meaneſt and moſt obſcure of his ſervants ſhould have no other to plead for him, the Judge himſelf will do it, and proclaim every circumſtance that may favour him, although it may have been entirely forgotten by the world, and even by the perſon himſelf[a]. Many pious ſouls will, on that day, be aſtoniſhed at the recollection of ten thouſand labours of love, of which they themſelves had no manner of remembrance. Indeed, it was no concern of theirs to preſerve the memory of their own actions. They knew that all of them were

[a] Mat. xxv. 37.

were moſt carefully recorded elſewhere. This day, on which *the books are opened*, ſhows that they were not deceived in their opinion of their LORD's mercy.

Yet even this GOD of mercy muſt be alſo a GOD of juſtice. He muſt be true to the cauſe of heaven as well as of earth, and judge his creatures exactly according to thoſe laws which he had formerly given them as the rule of their conduct. He muſt make a diſtinction between the righteous and the wicked; between thoſe who improved their talents, and thoſe who improved them not. And what a keen edge muſt it give to the ſelf-accuſations of the wicked, to think that a GOD who is Mercy itſelf, was, after their having long abuſed his patience and rejected his grace, forced at length to condemn them! To condemn them, after having ſo loved them as to deſcend from his eternal throne, and die in their aſſumed nature upon the croſs, in order to procure them a capacity of being ſaved! No taunt in hell itſelf can be ſo ſevere, as that with which the devil may

twit

twit ſuch perſons. "Behold an UNGRATEFUL who abuſed the love of JESUS!"

Ingratitude to JESUS! thou blackeſt of crimes! devils have no engine of torment, hell hath no fire or worm, nor heaven any vial of wrath, to give thy guilt its adequate puniſhment!—So vaſt, ſo infinite, ſo incomprehenſible, is the love of JESUS to the ſouls of men, that if any one requite it not with all the ſincerity and intenſeneſs which his limited powers are capable of, and love not, infinitely above his own life, the SON of GOD, who loved him even unto the death, and who died upon the croſs to ſave him, the worſt *anathema maranatha* is too good for him. Methinks, were even I myſelf that monſter of ingratitude, I could join in bidding all the univerſe of GOD call me accurſed [a].

Indeed the demerit of every ſin, even thoſe of a lighter dye than this, will appear from all the tranſactions of the laſt day, to have been of a more dreadful nature than was ever before conceived by men. To ſee how glorious a Being that is, whom it

[a] 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

it behoved to die in order to atone for ſin; to ſee millions conſigned over to extreme and everlaſting wo for having perſiſted in it; to ſee the bodies of the ſaints themſelves undergoing ſuch changes before they could be delivered from it; and to ſee even the world, in which ſinners dwelt, condemned to the fire, like an infected houſe, before it could be purified from the contagion;—all this muſt repreſent the evil of ſin, and its odiouſneſs in the ſight of GOD, in ſo ſtriking a manner, that it is impoſſible even *he*, at whoſe inſtigation angels revolted, ſhould ever after this day be able to tempt any of the ſaved to be guilty of the leaſt tranſgreſſion. Happy! could we view ſin in this light now, and ſhun like hell whatever has the leaſt appearance of evil. But if we do not, we hope that other worlds, which may have to paſs through a ſtate of probation, may behave more wiſely; to which the tranſactions of this day, and the fate of ſinners, may greatly contribute. But, O let us contend to glorify GOD, by being the tro-

phies

phies of his mercy rather than of his power; and let us with gratitude adore his name, that, through his patience and grace, the happy choice, the invaluble opportunity, is ſtill continued with us.—Verily, O GOD, thou haſt no pleaſure at all in the death of ſinners, when we are hitherto preſerved and not conſumed!

Whilſt we are ſpeaking of the gratitude and love ſo due to GOD, and to his SON who redeemed us and ſent down his Spirit the Comforter, it may be proper to obſerve, that as this is the firſt duty and the great commandment, a ſacred attention to it ought always to be the ſovereign deſire and ruling paſſion of our ſouls. This was the chief ſpring which actuated all the holy and happy beings whom we have been contemplating as they ſtood on the right-hand of JESUS. This was the ſacred ſource of all their labours of love, of all their painful ſufferings. Theſe ſeemed to them but a light thing, for the love which they bare to GOD. This love made his yoke eaſy, and his every burden

light,

light. It inſpired them with reſignation and contentment in every condition; gave them on earth an earneſt and a foretaſte of heaven, and filled them with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. But the conſolations and advantages of this ſacred paſſion, which we ought with all poſſible care to cultivate, are only to be felt, and not deſcribed. They are like the *white ſtone* and the *hidden manna*, which none can know but thoſe to whom they are given[a].

O LOVE to GOD! thou ſacred light, whoſe beams gladden the hearts of ſeraphs, and in whoſe brightneſs the cherubs baſk! Thou diffuſeſt thy rays thro' all the univerſe, and cheereſt with thy vital warmth the ſouls of the pious in its moſt diſtant regions. Thou changeſt the darkneſs into light, and the midnight into meridian ſplendour. Thou converteſt the heath and the wilderneſs into green paſtures; thou openeſt ſprings of water in the dry places, and fountains of comfort in the deſart.—Inſpired by thee, the poor, naked,

[a] Rev. ii. 17.

naked, and houſeleſs mendicant goes on in his thorny and rúgged way, like the rich eunuch, rejoicing. He reads in thy clear beam his charter for heaven, and exults with joy over his unſpeakable treaſure. All nature is to his eye beauty, and to his ear muſic. The gloomy vale ſmiles before him. The bleak mountains and the barren hills break forth into ſinging, and all the trees of the field clap their hands in ſympathy with his joy. The thorn, to his cheerful and contented eye, appears a fir; the brier is a myrtle. The flinty path is covered with flowers; and the rack itſelf is, to him, a couch of down to reſt upon.—I ſee the future angel now in the barren wilderneſs; I ſee him bending his knee to heaven with gratitude, becauſe the lines have fallen to him in places ſo pleaſant. With increaſing light and joy, I ſee him travelling on to the mount of GOD, as Elijah to Horeb, in the midſt of guardian angels and attending ſpirits. He ſits down at the ſcanty brook to eat his little morſel of bread and water, and bleſſeth GOD for the

milk

milk and the honey-comb, with which he is ſatisfied. "Thou haſt not," he ſays, "provided ſo rich a repaſt for others, nor granted them ſo exquiſite and delicious a viand!"—No, heir of glory! for thou haſt ate of the hidden manna of thoſe angels who ſat down to their ſpiritual meal beſide thee, and who gave thee a portion of their fare, as thou wouldſt have given a ſhare of thine to any other that wanted. Thou haſt alſo drank with them of that ſtream which quenches the thirſt of ſeraphs, makes glad the city of GOD, and waters the plains of Paradiſe.—O how I envy thee thy happineſs, though thou doſt travel the pilgrimage of life, without ſhoes, or ſcrip, or changes of raiment!

Shed abroad this love to GOD in my heart, O Divine Spirit, and it ſufficeth!

§ 4. WE have ſeen, that the judgment ſhall be ſo general, as to comprehend the univerſal race of mankind, with all the legions of evil ſpirits; ſo public, that every individual ſhall be judged in the eye of the univerſe; and ſo circumſtantial and particular

cular, that every ſingle circumſtance in the life of every individual ſhall be inveſtigated, with all its cauſes and all its conſequences. Indeed, no thought, word, or action, could well be omitted, as, however trifling to appearance, each contributed ſomething towards forming the character. If none of us, then, may hope to eſcape the judgment, or to paſs in the immenſe crowd unobſerved; if we cannot take the wings of the morning, and fly to any part of the univerſe from GOD's power and preſence;— why do we not endeavour, with the utmoſt earneſtneſs of ſoul, to make our peace with him, that we may be able to ſtand before him with joy on the day of his appearing? If our moſt ſecret guilt, unleſs repented of, ſhall be revealed on that day, what boots it now that we ſo anxiouſly conceal it from the eyes of men, ſince nothing can be concealed from the eyes of our Witneſs and our Judge; thoſe flaming eyes which guard his holy law, and which look with abhorrence on all the workers of iniquity? Why not maintain a ſtrict and jealous guard over every thought, word,

and

and action? For it is impoſſible to ſay how much even the ſmalleſt and moſt imperceptible of theſe ſeedlings may ſpread and multiply, or what a plentiful harveſt of happineſs or miſery may ſpring from each of them, againſt that day in which we ſhall reap according to what we now ſow [a].

Will any one object here, that a day, or even an age, is not ſufficient time for ſo circumſtantial a judgment? Thou fool, who *knoweſt not the power of God*, what if *a thouſand years* ſhould, in this reſpect, be counted with the LORD as *one day?* Or, as days and time ſhall ceaſe at the commencement of this ſolemnity, what if it ſhould be one of the revolutions or periods in eternity, if ſuch there be, that is here denoted? Or what if our faculties ſhall be naturally ſo enlarged on our paſſing out of the body, that, as we now can carry our ideas in an inſtant from heaven to earth, from the beginning of time to the end of it, ſo we may then be able, almoſt inſtantaneouſly,

[a] Gal. vi. 7.

not only to comprehend the two extremes, but alſo all the incidents that lie between them? Our very dreams, in which the adventures of many months and years are often included in the compaſs of a few minutes, ſeem faintly to indicate what the ſoul is capable of, when diveſted of its clog of clay. Or rather, what if HE, before whoſe eye all things from eternity to eternity lie open and unveiled, ſhould then communicate ſo much of that power to his creatures, as ſhall enable them to recollect in a moment the ideas of an age; or to comprehend at one intuitive view a great part of the affairs of time, without either the medium of words, or that tedious ſucceſſion of ideas to which we are now accuſtomed, but which may not be neceſſary in the converſation of ſpirits? And who knoweth but ſuch a compaſs of underſtanding may be a principal ingredient in the happineſs of the bleſſed, and in the miſery of the damned; making the pleaſant or painful ideas of many ages centre at once in every point of that ſpace which in-

intervenes?—But things revealed belong to us. Beyond theſe, the beſt reaſonings about the objects of faith are but mere conjectures; and our ideas of moſt of them fall, perhaps, as far ſhort of the reality, as thoſe of the child in the womb do of the ſyſtem of this world into which he is not yet entered. We have reaſon, however, to be thankful that every thing which it concerns us now to know, is as plain as we could poſſibly wiſh it. Life and immortality are clearly brought to light in the goſpel.

But many, of whom a few inſtances came under our view, affect to diſbelieve the goſpel, and all that it reveals concerning a future world.—*This* philoſopher ſuppoſes that miracles are no proper evidence of a revelation's coming from GOD; and *that* critic finds that there are different readings in the various copies of the Greek Teſtament, and therefore concludes that the authors were not divinely inſpired.—Let us ſuppoſe that both theſe objections are valid, (neither of which are ſo); and

let us aſk the objectors, What are mankind benefited by the diſcovery? Why, we learn, if we believe them, that the goſpel is not to be depended on; that the beſt moral ſyſtem in the world may have no authority; that the beſt example may be but an imaginary picture; that we have no promiſe of pardon for our tranſgreſſions, no proſpect of reward for our obedience: in a word, that life is a dream, and heaven a fable.—Uſeful diſcovery this, truly, for the welfare of ſociety and for the peace of mankind!—Blot out the ſun from the natural world, and you do leſs miſchief to the ſyſtem, than you do to the rational world by denying the divine authority of the Scriptures, or by denying the Divinity of JESUS.

Suppoſe Chriſtianity, which is ETERNAL TRUTH, were no more than a ſolemn cheat, I ſhould not thank the man who would officiouſly undeceive me. To be under the power of principles that would influence and ſupport me in life and death, I ſhould call a happy deluſion. And *if*

I had been all this while in a dream, I ſhould think that man a villain who deſignedly awoke me to truth and miſery; to know my real ſtate to be real ſorrow.—Yet, ſtrange as it may ſeem, it is this man, who would rob me of my trueſt peace, of my eternal reverſion in heaven, that is recommended, applauded, admired, as a man of genius, and an aſſertor of the rights and liberties of mankind; while another, who robs me of a trifle of my property, to which he may have been inſtigated by this man's tenets, is turned over to judgment, and doomed to execution.——If your criticiſm imagines there is ſome inconſiſtency in the genealogies given us by the Evangeliſts; and if your philoſophy cannot clearly admit the evidence of miracles; yet if the tendency of your diſcoveries be ſo hurtful to ſociety, what motives of conſcience, what ſpirit of benevolence, compel you to publiſh them to mankind? We find both joy and peace in believing. We feel ourſelves, while under the power of Chriſtian principles, filled

with hopes big with immortality. We are satisfied with GOD's presence in this world, and love and long for his appearance in another.—Why then, cruel critic and philosopher, will you rob us of the joy of our heart? why remit us to the elements of nature, the doubts of scepticism, and the melancholy imagination of no paternal providence, no future state, and no redeeming love?—Enjoy your guilt and your gloom alone. Go, utter your complaints to the woods and rocks; breathe out your wretchedness in solitude and in the desart; and infect not the world with the poison of your principles. Go, herd with the brutes, whose appetites you adopt, and whose death you are willing to die; but curse not me with your discoveries, nor kill me with your notions! O tear me not from my GOD and SAVIOUR, the rock I find rest on; nor press me down the precipice of destruction before the time!—Comfortless world, and melancholy nature, when immortality and JESUS are shut out of the prospect!—How cruel

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is the ſtorm!—How wild the winds blow! How loud the waves beat! How am I tempeſted in the ocean of the world; ſteering by no chart, directed by no pilot, bound for no port, but where

"Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls!"

How was I but juſt now tranſported! A Parent God appearing in dazzling radiance, a ſhore of ſafety and of glory lay in proſpect! What dæmon hand hath ſnatched from my ſight the happy viſion! The radiant God and bliſsful ſhore are vaniſhed; and I am preſented with horrid rocks and opening gulphs: darkneſs and death ſurround me: terrors from above and below confound me *!

§ 5. We have ſeen that the laſt judgment ſhall be conducted with the ſtricteſt impartiality; for with God there is no reſpect either of perſons or of nations. This ſhould teach us to place no undue dependence on outward privileges, whether of Grace or of Providence; as they will only ſerve to aggravate our condemnation,

* See *View of Bolingbroke's moral character.*

if we ſhall not be found to have duly improved them. To have Abraham for our father, or JESUS for our maſter; to have been ſtewards of the myſteries of the goſpel, or to have ſwayed ſceptres over nations; are pleas which will not, at the laſt bar, obtain a hearing, if we cannot ſhow our diligence to turn ſuch privileges to the beſt advantage. One ſingle grain of holineſs, though found in a Heathen or Barbarian, will outweigh theſe valuable talents, if they were laid up in a napkin, idle and unoccupied. This conſideration ſhould teach us to guard againſt every uncharitable opinion of others who enjoy not the ſame advantages with us. If other nations are leſs favoured, they have therefore leſs to account for; and the meaneſt of them may find their caſe in the laſt day more tolerable than the ſtate of thoſe who now lord it over them. Did we think of this, we ſhould ſhow them leſs contempt, and more of that pity and compaſſion which their ſtate ſo often claims.—Denied that liberty which ſhould be the common

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privilege of humanity; denied all right either to the fruit of their body or the fruit of their toil; and bowed down under the galling load, till the laſt meſſenger of hope ſhall looſe their bonds, and admit them to thoſe peaceful chambers where *the weary are at reſt, where the voice of the oppreſſor is not heard, and where the ſlave is free from his lord*[a];—how bitter the draught! Should their maſters, with a gentle hand, adminiſter every poſſible cordial to theſe their leſs fortunate brethren in the houſe of their bondage, yet ſtill the cup of ſlavery, with all its palliatives, would be exceedingly bitter. But, inſtead of thus tempering it, the cruelty of the oppreſſor, alas too often! turns every drop of it into *the poiſon of aſps and gall.* Nay, what is ſtill more intolerable, their *Chriſtian* maſters, (pardon, JESUS, this profanation of thy name), ſhut up from them the book of GOD, and deny their parched ſouls to drink of the copious *ſtream of life*, or taſte the *waters of ſalvation!*

"As

[a] Job iii. 17.

"As if a ſlave were not a ſhred of nature,
Of the ſame common ſubſtance with his lord."

On this occaſion one can ſcarce forbear to cry with the ſouls under the altar, *How long, O Lord*[a]*!* But if the preſent hardſhips of theſe people demand our pity, their future reckoning, with all the allowances that may be made in their favour by a merciful GOD, the LORD alike of bond and free, may, I truſt, be more deſerving of envy.

The view of that impartiality with which the laſt judgment ſhall be conducted, ſhould guard us from cenſuring, with too much ſeverity and raſhneſs, the conduct of thoſe individuals, who, under ſeemingly equal advantages with their neighbours, have not made the ſame advances in holineſs. Till that day, in which all circumſtances ſhall be weighed, and all accounts balanced, none of us knoweth how little difference may be found between himſelf and that man of whom he may have the very worſt opinion. Perhaps, in the ſoul which

[a] Rev. vi. 10.

which that man received from the hand of GOD, in the nature which he derived from his parents, or in the conſtitution and temperament of his body, there may have been interwoven the ſeeds of ſome weakneſs, the bias to ſome ſin, from which our frame has been more happily exeemed. Perhaps his aſſaults from without have been more violent, as well as his temptations from within much ſtronger. Perhaps he was not favoured with ſuch good education and example; with ſuch lucky opportunities of doing good, or ſuch ſeaſonable outlets from evil. Perhaps men had not given him ſo many admonitions, his conſcience ſo many warnings, nor the Spirit of GOD ſo much aſſiſtance. And if ſo, it were unreaſonable to expect that his improvement ſhould be equal, when deprived of equal light and opportunity, of equal advantages and means of improvement.—How doſt thou know but thou thyſelf hadſt proved a worſe man than him, if in his place; and he, had he been in thy place, a much better? Where is the

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man who can ſay he might not be given to ſuperſtition, if born at Rome; or to idolatry, if born at Athens? That he might not be a zealous Muſſulman, if his lot had been caſt in Turkey; or a very Savage, had he lived among the tribes of India? That he might not be tainted with the common vices of the rich, and even forget his GOD, if expoſed to their temptations; or infected with the ſins which moſt eaſily beſet the poor, if placed in their condition[a]? None can warrantably ſay what he might have proved, if placed in his neighbour's circumſtances. What a call is this for ſeverity to our own faults, and charity to the failings of others, for whom we ought to make all the allowances we can, even when forced to cenſure and condemn them. —If any action of our brother had a hundred faces, we ſhould always look on that which is the faireſt.

The ſtrength and opportunities of men are ſo various, that perhaps that improvement which may procure thy neighbour

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[a] Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

a crown of immortality, may not ſave thee from condemnation, or only ſave thee *yet ſo as by fire.* There are ſo many circumſtances to be thrown into the ſcales, when every man is weighed, that the Omniſcient alone is fit to hold the balance. To Him, therefore, the proper Judge, let us leave the fate of others, and do what we can to ſecure our own ſalvation, by making the beſt improvement poſſible of all our opportunities and talents. —Let us eſpecially attend to the cultivation of charity in all its parts, which, next to the love of GOD, is the moſt important of all duties. If that is the firſt and great commandment, this is the ſecond, and it is *like unto the firſt*[a]. And vain are all our pretenſions to the love of GOD, if we do not evince it by our love to men.

Haſt thou fed the hungry, clothed the naked, taken the ſtranger in, viſited the ſick and the priſoner, and taken compaſſion on the ſouls that were out of the way? —are therefore the grand though not the only

[a] Mat. xxii. 39.

only inquiries of the laſt judgment. What a powerful motive is this to the exerciſe of every ſpecies of charity and benevolence, whether in our actions, expreſſions, or affections! Poſſeſſed of this amiable and god-like diſpoſition, when found in conjunction with piety and love to GOD, (and how vaſt the pity unleſs it always is!) the meaneſt of rational beings hath at leaſt the ſecond ingredient of preſent happineſs, and the moſt apparent badge of future glory. He hath an earneſt and prelibation of heaven, and a ray of light from above to guide him to the place where MERCY hath her throne. With this emanation from above, this ray of the Spirit of Love to direct him, he will find his way from the verge of the univerſe and from the ſuburbs of creation, to that ſource of light whence ſprings the ſacred beam; even to the dwelling of his FATHER-GOD. A cheerful light, as he travels on, will ſhine around him, and a heavenly joy will fill his ſpirit. If his path is dark, this will enlighten it; and if difficult, this will

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make it eaſiy. Through every maze of life the cords of love will lead him; and in every labyrinth of death, the light of benevolence will ſhine, like noon-day, around him. Kindred angels will viſit his dreams while he is aſleep, and congenial ſpirits will converſe with his ſoul when he awaketh. In times of danger, they will ſpread their wings around him as a pavilion, contend with thoſe who would hurt him, and bid the LORD rebuke all that oppoſe him. Through every ſtep of his journey heavenward, were it ten thouſand worlds in length, thoſe miniſtering ſpirits will comfort and aſſiſt him. They will bear him on their arms over the roughеſt places, leſt he daſh at any time his foot againſt a ſtone; and, at laſt, they will join him in hymning eternal halleluiahs for his deliverance, around the heavenly throne of GOD.—*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*[a].

§ 6. THE great improvement which we

[a] John iv. 16.

we ought to make of the view which we have had of the bleſſed on the right-hand of JESUS, is, to imitate thoſe excellencies in their characters, for which we ſaw them accepted and rewarded. For this end, we ſhould frequently review their virtues, and examine, as we go along, whether theſe virtues are yet in any eminent degree our own. If not, we ſhould early and earneſtly uſe every mean to adopt and copy them, that we may ſtand in our lot on that day among the happy number. And in order to animate us to this undertaking, how encouraging the view which we have had of the vaſt variety of the characters of the ſaints, and of the ſovereign variety in the means and methods of their converſion? If the REDEEMER hath ſo many trophies of all ſorts of people, from all ages and from all countries; if he has ſome who were called at every ſeaſon of life, and ſome who were once guilty of almoſt every crime; if his free and ſovereign grace is ſo able to reclaim ſinners by any method, or by any means; if he invites all, and

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was never known to reject any one who came to him: In a word, if JESUS is thus "willing to redeem and ſtrong to ſave," what room have we to deſpair, if we earneſtly apply to him, and carefully uſe the means of ſalvation which he himſelf hath appointed? Let none deſpiſe thoſe means, nor think to ſubſtitute any devices of his own in place of them. Shall man be wiſer than his Maker? Even if I thought the means preſcribed for my remedy weak and uſeleſs, yet would I uſe them with a religious exactneſs, were it only to have it to plead at the laſt day, That I could do no more than I did in order to ſecure my ſalvation. Such a plea, I am ſure, would not be urged in vain.

But why think any means which Infinite Wiſdom hath preſcribed, weak or inadequate? Or, why diſtruſt the power of the Omnipotent to give ſucceſs to his own appointments? If He ſhall but ſay the word, Siloam ſhall give ſight to the blind, Jordan health to the leper; a ſmall rod ſhall part the ſea, or cleave the rock; and

the ſound of ram-horns ſhall break down the walls of Jericho. *To him that* attempteth and *believeth*, *all things are poſſible* [a].—Who, then, that hath ſeen the vaſt happineſs of the bleſſed, will not reſolutely attempt, and ſtrive to have a ſhare in it? For my part, (ſuch, I truſt, is the genuine language of every ſoul that hath viewed the happy number), after having ſeen their glory, their crowns, their palms, and their white robes, I am reſolved, *whatſoever things are true*, *whatſoever things are honeſt*, *whatſoever things are pure*, *whatſoever things are lovely*, *whatſoever things are of good report*; *if there be any virtue*, *if there be any praiſe*, *to think of theſe things and to purſue them* [b]. I will contend, as for life, to imitate the piety of the Patriarchs, the zeal of the Prophets, the love and labour of the Apoſtles, the conſtancy of the Martyrs, and the courage of the Confeſſors.—Or, rather, I will look up to thee for example, as well as for help, O thou Author and Finiſher of my faith! And then, when thou art with me, I ſhall not

[a] Mark ix. 23. [b] Phil. iv. 8.

not be afraid, although my difficulties were a thouſand times greater, my enemies a thouſand times more numerous and ten thouſand times more powerful. Although I have no power nor might of my own, yet, in reliance on thy help, I will undertake whatever thou art pleaſed to bid me, and cheerfully go forth to meet any hoſt againſt which thou art pleaſed to call me. If thou doſt but ſay Go, immediately I bow my ſoul and obey; and *if I periſh, I periſh.*

Of the view which we have had of the wicked on the other hand, the improvement which we ought to make is, To mark often and attentively their different characters, and to examine narrowly whether we ourſelves may not, in any particular, or in any degree, reſemble them. Whereever we diſcover the leaſt likeneſs, we ſhould, with all poſſible earneſtneſs, ſet ourſelves immediately to correct the diſorder. Where the danger is ſo dreadful, no flight can be too quick, no effort too great, in order to avoid it. If the wages of ſin be death,

what carefulneſs to ſhun it, *what clearing of ourſelves, yea what indignation, what fear, what vehement deſire, what zeal, what revenge ſhould we have againſt it*[a]? Quick as we would fly from an houſe on fire, we ſhould ſeparate ourſelves from ſin and ſinners, and make ſure of our peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST. Every moment, till our hours are numbered, we ſhould maintain over ourſelves a ſtrict and jealous guard, leſt at any time we may be overtaken in the practice of any ſin, or in the neglect of any duty. To ſtand, for one moment, under threatnings ſo terrible as thoſe that are ſuſpended, by a very ſlender thread, over the head of the ſinner, or to ſlacken our diligence in any meaſure, till we are entirely beyond the reach of their danger, is a ſpecies of madneſs which can have no parallel. Yet how many do we ſee who are daily and hourly chargeable with it, by preſuming wilfully on ſin, or perſevering careleſsly in impenitence? Nay, ſo general is this diſeaſe, that they are

[a] 2 Cor. vii. 11.

are the feweſt who are not infected with it. For, *ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it* [a].

It therefore imports each of us, as much as the life of his ſoul is worth, to know whether he himſelf may not be in the unhappy number. If, after a ſtrict and impartial examination, we find that we are, let us not deceive ourſelves by delaying our repentance, if it were but for a ſingle day. The chances againſt its ever taking place, when for any time put off, are ſo great and ſo many, that it were almoſt as wiſe to reſolve at once never to repent at all. And even if it were poſſible that we could aſſure ourſelves of the inclination, opportunity, and grace of repentance at ſome future period, none of which any man on earth can promiſe to himſelf with ſafety; yet, have we not ſeen what irreparable miſchief our bad example may do in the mean time? May not this, in one day, infect many; and, through them, extend its in-

[a] Mat. vii. 14.

fluence to other perſons, to other places, and to other ages? And, may not the conſequence be, that our ſouls, notwithſtanding ſome faint efforts towards a late perſonal reformation, may ſtand a chance in the world of ſpirits, to feel, like the ſouls of Dives and Jeroboam, an increaſe of torment, in proportion to the increaſe of ſuch influence; till at length the day of judgment ſhall ſum up all the parts of the long and dreadful reckoning? And are the poor, the periſhing, the painted pleaſures of ſin, and the deluſive dreams of ſinners, worth all this riſk, all this torment?—*Come out from among them, O my ſoul; unto their aſſembly, mine honour, be not thou united*[a]!—Should I, although it were to gain a kingdom or a crown, linger for one moment in the place of ſinners; O Thou, who didſt pull Lot out of Sodom, ſend, I pray, thine angel to ſpeed me! I will not look back on any trifle I may loſe, whilſt I flee with the life of my ſoul to the city of refuge.

From what we have ſeen to be the dan-

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[a] Gen. xlix. 6.

ger and difficulty of obtaining ſalvation in ſome communities, particularly in that of the ſpiritual Babylon, we ſhould learn the utmoſt gratitude for the reformed purity in which we enjoy our holy religion. And the proper expreſſion of that gratitude is, by a holy life and converſation, to recommend this religion to others. *Arguments* may loſe their force, when levelled againſt the ſtrong barrier of prejudice and ſuperſtition, which the church of Rome hath raiſed againſt them; otherwiſe that ſingle argument, drawn from her want of charity, in not allowing ſalvation to any that are without her narrow pale, were ſufficient to overthrow all her claims of being the true and catholic church of JESUS. They who want the moſt diſtinguiſhing badge of CHRIST's diſciples, cannot ſurely have the proper relation to him.—*Perſuaſions*, too, may have no effect upon ſuch as will not hearken to the voice of an angel, who ſtill cries to them, *Come out of her, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye*

receive not of her plagues[a].—But a good example, flowing from a ſpirit of benevolence and charity, will ſtrike with the moſt irreſiſtible and attractive charms. This will conquer when all other weapons fail. What pity is it that our gratitude and zeal have not been more exerted to recommend our religion in this manner, not only to thoſe of that communion, but to all other nations with whom we have any intercourſe. Alas! the reverſe hath been too often our conduct, cauſing the name of JESUS to be odious among the heathen; for which we may fear *our judgment ſlumbereth not.* But more glorious times are yet promiſed to the goſpel; and they ſhall come.—O LORD, our prayer is, that thou wouldſt bid them haſten!

§ 7. IN the courſe of that view which we have taken of the judgment we might diſcover many important reaſons for which that public ſolemnity may have been appointed, an attention to which may not be alto-

[a] Rev. xviii. 4.

altogether uſeleſs. One of theſe reaſons, as we might have already obſerved, was, to throw light on the Divine adminiſtration of the world. Not that GOD needs *give an account of any of his matters;* but that the view of the whole ſcheme of Providence and of Grace, when unravelled to the wondering eyes of the ſaints, may remove all their diſtreſſing doubts, increaſe their joy, and furniſh them with an ample field of praiſe, from the diſcoveries which it will give them of the goodneſs of GOD, and of the riches of his mercy in JESUS CHRIST. With raviſhing delight they will then trace his footſteps even *in the great deep*, and ſee how his hand guided the moſt ſeemingly contingent, as well as the moſt important, ſteps of their life. They will ſee how he made the darkneſs as well as the light, the evil as well as the good, help forward their ſalvation. Whether they were exerciſed with proſperity or adverſity, with joy or with ſorrow; whether they walked in the barren deſart, where they could find no ſprings of comfort, or in green

green paſtures along the ſtill and ſilent waters; they will ſee that he was uniformly leading them to glory, though ſometimes by paths which they did not know, and by means which they did not like.—How ſhould this teach us, not only the moſt ſubmiſſive reſignation to the will of GOD, but even the moſt cheerful delight in it in every condition; fully perſuaded, that, if it be not our own fault, Whatever is, is beſt. Even the ſevereſt afflictions, however forbiding their aſpect, may be our greateſt mercies; and as ſuch ought to be thankfully welcomed whenever GOD is pleaſed to ſend them. They are indeed the laſt remedy in many deſperate caſes; and hopeleſs is that man's condition who is not greatly improved by them. But happy is the man who can, in the moſt trying condition, ſay with the king of Iſrael, *Here am I, let God do with me what he pleaſeth*[a]. Nor leſs happy is he who can ſay in recounting his chief mercies, *I have been afflicted*. With this perſuaſion of

[a] 2 Sam. xv. 26.

of all things working together for good to thoſe that love GOD, let us bear our ſhare of the fardels of life, with patience, reſignation, and joy.

" Ye good diſtreſs'd!
Ye noble few! who here unbending ſtand
Beneath life's preſſure, yet bear up a while;
And what your bounded view, which only ſees
A little part, deems evil, is no more."

Beſides the inſight which this day will give to the ſaints into the adminiſtration of GOD, it will alſo let them into each other's character; the knowledge of which will bring a vaſt acceſſion to their joy. The ſimilar circumſtances in many of their caſes, with their having been all ſinners, and all ſaved, will wonderfully unite the ſouls of the bleſſed. The prayers which they ſhall all be found to have put up for each other's ſalvation, and the zeal with which they endeavoured to promote it, will now appear conſpicuous, and give the finiſhing ſtroke to their friendſhip. And what a fund of ſacred joy will thence accrue! What a fund of praiſe will the

various and wonderful circumſtances in every one's ſalvation afford to the whole ſociety! All for every ſingle one! A pleaſure and praiſe almoſt infinite!

A judgment-day may have been alſo appointed, perhaps principally, for putting honour on the SON of GOD. It is highly proper that this Holy and Divine Perſon who was buffetted and affronted, condemned and crucified, by an ungrateful and injurious world, ſhould now judge his judges, and be as far advanced above the pinnacle of human greatneſs as he was once below it. It is fit that Herod may ſee that he perſecuted, not the infant king of a petty province, but the Sovereign of angels and of men; and that Pilate and the Jews may be convinced that HE whom they called King in ſcorn, is really a greater Emperor than Cæſar.

That this day was deſigned for putting honour on the SON of GOD, or at leaſt that it ſhall have this effect in an eminent degree, has plainly appeared from what we have ſeen of the manner in which he will,

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on that day, be *glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believed.* Every single saint is a trophy which will on that occasion magnify the triumph of the SON of GOD. It is true, as he is *God blessed for evermore*, this can add nothing to his happiness; although in respect of his human nature it may. As the head, he will still have a fellow-felling with the members, and rejoice when they rejoice. And can there ever be any occasion of greater joy to the saints, than to see themselves saved from everlasting misery, and put in possession of everlasting happiness?—Yes, to see HIM who loved them and died for them, their GOD, their SAVIOUR, their Friend, and their elder Brother, now exalted so very high, after having for ever subdued all his and their enemies. This will afford them, if possible, still greater joy than their own salvation. "Methinks," said a holy man, "if I saw but one glimpse of my once crucified SAVIOUR upon the throne of his glory, I could afterwards dwell contented even in hell."—Grateful soul! I could

ſtake my life that thou ſhalt never be put to the trial. And were it poſſible thou ſhouldſt, ſuch love to JESUS, could it enter thither, would ſuſpend the hotteſt rage of the infernal flame. In the very midſt of it thou wouldſt walk unhurt; like the three children in the furnace, when they had with them a *fourth like the Son of God*[a]. Now if the ſaints be thus happy, will not the King of ſaints participate of their joy? If the ſervants are ſo highly happy, will there not a ſtill higher honour and happineſs accrue to their LORD, who is united to them in one and the ſame ſpirit[b]?

This day was further ordained for the honour of all the faithful ſoldiers who *fought the good fight of faith* under the banner of JESUS. Much ſuffering, ſhame, and reproach, did many of them endure in his ſervice. But they bore all with joy, as they looked forward to this day, which was to wipe off eternally all their unmerited diſgrace. And now they ſhall not be diſappointed. Whoſoever confeſſed JESUS be-

fore

[a] Dan. iii. 25. [b] 1 Cor. xi. 17.

fore men, he will alſo confeſs them before earth and heaven. Many of their graces, too, were hitherto ſecret, and ſeen only by the eye of GOD. But this day, as their LORD hath promiſed, will reveal and reward them openly; and thereby promote, what he always hath in view, the happineſs and honour of his people. How much it will anſwer this end, is now beyond our conception. Even the approbation of a great and good man, we are proud of. That of an archangel, would be ſtill more deſireable. That of every good man and every good angel, one would die for.—But to be hailed by JESUS as a friend, and applauded by the Supreme Judge of all worlds, before the general aſſembly of the univerſe, is a heaven of felicity which no power of language can deſcribe. In the very faint idea which we can already have of it, there is a weight of glory which almoſt cruſhes weak mortality to duſt; which almoſt makes the ſpirit ſtart with joy out of its earthly frame, to meet it.—The true Chriſtian hath ſtill

need

need of patience when his LORD delays his coming.

From what we have obſerved of the tranſactions of the Great Day, we may further add, that it was ordained for the public ſhame of all the enemies of GOD, and of his people. On earth, the wheat and the tares grew ſo promiſcuouſly, that the one could not be pulled up without hurting the other alſo [a]. Perhaps, too, the ſaint unborn, is yet to ſpring from the living ſinner, as Jonathan deſcended from Saul; and from the wicked Amon the good Joſiah. Or, perhaps, there may be ſome things in which the good may need the ſervices of the bad; and in which GOD may yet have ſome end to ſerve by ſparing them; as, in the wilderneſs, *the earth helped the woman* [b]. The ſeparation is, therefore, deferred until the time of the harveſt, when the field altogether ſhall be reaped.

Beſides, in this world, men are but in a ſtate of probation; on which account GOD makes

[a] Mat. xiii. 29. [b] Rev. xii. 16.

makes only so much distinction between the good and the bad, as to shew that he does not overlook the conduct of either; not so much as to supersede a future reckoning. A day of retribution, therefore, shall this be, to the bad as well as to the good. A day of shame to those who were ashamed of JESUS, as well as of honour to those who honoured him. A day in which the Great Master of the household will return to ask an account of his servants; and not only to reward such as improved their talents, but also to punish severely such as improved them not [a]. Or, to speak in the style of the parable, he will come to cause *his enemies, who would not have him to reign over them, to be brought and slain before him.* Not that we are to imagine from this, that the King JEHOVAH is ambitious of making a public show of a handful of captive rebels and impotent enemies. No; far be it from us to think of GOD after this unworthy manner. The salvation of a single penitent must give him infinitely more

[a] Luke xix. 12—27.

pleaſure than the deſtruction of all the wicked, in which, indeed, *he hath no pleaſure at all.* To convince even them of this truth, ſuch a public trial may be indulged them for their ſatisfaction; as well as to illuſtrate to all the univerſe the equity and rectitude of the Divine government. After ſo fair and public a trial as the very worſt of beings ſhall have on *this day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,* when any plea which they themſelves, or any other creature in the univerſe, could offer in their behalf, would have been heard, none of them can ever complain of any injuſtice in his trial or ſentence.

Nor is it only the juſtice but even the mercy of GOD, that will be magnified in the eye of the univerſe by this open and public trial of the wicked; as it will give all other rational beings ſuch a view of the evil of ſin, eſpecially when aggravated by the abuſe of the greateſt mercy, as muſt excite their utter abhorrence of every appearance or ſhadow of tranſgreſſion. This effect, we may preſume, the laſt judgment will

will produce, not only in the breasts of the blessed, who can *neither sin nor sorrow any more;* but also in other innumerable beings of perhaps future worlds, to whom this example of *both the goodness and severity of God* may be revealed; and to whom it may prove highly useful in the course of their probation.

Beside the clear discovery which this day will give to the saints of the equity and rectitude of GOD's dealings even toward the worst of beings, it may also give them a higher relish of their own felicity. As long as these holy beings shall see the smoke of hell, or remember this awful day, the joyful sense of their own salvation must be for ever fresh and new to them.—Together with these reasons for a day of public judgment, the light of that day itself may discover several others that may be much clearer and stronger. And, therefore,

§ 8. To conclude: One other important reason for which this day may have

been appointed, and so much of its solemnity revealed, is, To rouse us up to make all possible preparation for so awful a period. This is the great improvement which we ought to make of all that hath been said upon this grand subject. It was with a view of producing, in some measure, this effect upon my own soul, and those of others, that I have already dwelt so long upon it; and that I now again, with all possible earnestness of spirit, as in the view of the judgment, and in presence of the Judge and his holy angels, call back to our thoughts, and leave fresh upon our souls, that unspeakably solemn scene. A scene, which perhaps our eyes may see, before our ears again have an opportunity of hearing it discoursed of. There is but a step betwixt all of us and death: And then the short slumber of the tomb is but like the sleep of a summer's evening; one thinks he is scarce entered upon it when the morning of the resurrection comes, and the trump of God awakes him.— How careful, therefore, should we be, and

how quick, to put our ſouls in readineſs, and to maintain them always in a prepared poſture for going forth, even at a midnight call, to meet theſe awful events? The angel of death, for aught we know, may be juſt now on the wing to ſummon us hence; and this is the ſame to us as if he were the harbinger of the judgment. O how near, then, how exceeding near, are we to thoſe things of which we have been ſpeaking; to this grand event, that ſhall determine our lot for ever!——Methinks, I ſee already many of thoſe ſigns which prognoſticate this great and terrible day of the LORD, and ſeem to intimate that it is nigh, even at the door. I ſee nation riſing againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom. I hear of wars, and rumours of wars. The love of many is waxing cold; and iniquity, like a mighty torrent, is ſtill increaſing as it flows. Amidſt the prevailing floods of ungodly men, I hear the groans of oppreſſed innocence aſcending to the ears of the LORD of Hoſts, and riſing for a memorial before his throne. I

see the natural world beginning to sympathise with the moral, and to give signs which indicate that the Judge is coming; as the fig-tree, when it shoots forth its leaves, tells that the summer is then nigh. The sun, which, till this awful period, smiled as he ran his cheerful course, now grows unwilling to shed so much of his kind influence, and seems more frugal of his beams. He begins to hide his ashamed face from mens transgressions; and, with heaviness, drags his chariot-wheels along. The moon and stars lose their light, like flames almost extinct, and walk through heaven disconsolate and dim. The small number of saints that still remain on the earth, which are but as the gleanings of the harvest, or as the few berries left on the top of the uppermost bough, when the vintage is gathered and the olive-tree is shaken[a], lift up their heads with joy at the signs of their approaching redemption, and cry, *How long, O Lord, holy and true! Come, come quickly, Lord Jesus!*—And methinks I

[a] Isa. xvii. 6.

I hear him, who, although he bear long with his elect, hath promised at length to hear them, now reply, *Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me*[a]! I see the angels, on hearing this voice, girding themselves for the solemn work, and all the hosts of heaven gathering thick around that white throne which they are to accompany to judgment! Hark! how they sing, *Our Lord shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.* And hear! he immediately issues out the orders: *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made with me a covenant*[b].——Methinks I hear, next, the destroying angel, who had formerly been sent out against Egypt, Sodom, Gomorrah, and Jerusalem, commissioned now to destroy the world altogether, and *thrust in his sickle to it*, because its harvest is ripe for destruction;—and that other angel, who saved Noah,

[a] Rev. xxii. 12. [b] Ps. l.

Lot, and the elect in Jeruſalem, crying after him with a loud voice, to touch nothing till the people of GOD are firſt marked out and ſaved [a].—I hear the archangel's ſolemn voice arreſting the ſun in the midſt of heaven, as he toſſes the ſhattered wheels of TIME from off their broken axis.—I hear the clangor of the laſt trumpet, with loud cracks of thunder, breaking the elemental machine to pieces; unhinging the frame of nature; and bidding the grand fabric of creation fall in ruins, with a craſhing noiſe, over its broken pillars. I ſee orbs ruſh on orbs, worlds wrecked on worlds, and ſyſtems on ſyſtems. I ſee, in the twinkling of an eye, the living changed, the dead raiſed, and all together caught up, ſoaring with joy, or dragged with reluctance, to meet the deſcending tribunal.—See the garment which was once divided, flowing in folds of light, with ineffable ſplendor! To where it ſtreams on high, the happy ſpeed their flight, and preſs to take hold if it ſhould be

but

[a] Rev. xiv. 15. & xvii. 3.

but of a ſingle ſhred in the hem of it.—See the expanſe of heaven, from the one end to the other, fulgid with rays iſſuing from the heavenly fires on which CHRIST ſits, enviroined with glories and terrors, amidſt his bleſſed hoſts. See the books opened and read, and all the millions of the race of Adam divided, by a ſingle dart of the eye of the Judge, into two bands, the good and the bad; for, no other diſtinction on this day is regarded.—See each coming forth, and ſtanding, in his turn, before the tribunal; his character examined, his fate decided, and angels or devils carrying him off to this ſide or to that, according to the iſſue of his trial, and the tenor of his ſentence. See the impaſſable gulph drawn between them; and ſee the Judge's countenance emitting corruſcations of a benign or terrible light, to either ſide; filling the righteous with joy, and the wicked with terror; whilſt the final ſentence iſſues from his mouth, like two arrows, the one with SALVATION, the other with DAM-

DAMNATION inſcribed upon it*. See the manſions of Paradiſe and the furnace of the Abyſs opened, to receive all to their reſpective habitations for eternity. See the glories ineffable which ſhine in the one, made glad by thoſe emanations of uncreated light which flow from the throne of GOD. And ſee the dark, livid flames of burning ſulphur emitted from the other. See the door of the bottomleſs pit now for ever *ſhut on the blaſpheming cries of the devils*, and on the ſhrieks of the damned!—Oh! how unlike the chorus of theſe elect men and angels, entering heaven under the Captain of their ſalvation, with exceeding joy! A glorious and triumphant hoſt! clothed in robes of light, with harps and green palm-trees in their hands, beginning thoſe ecſtatic raptures of praiſe, whoſe duration only eternity can meaſure. I ſee the everlaſting gates lift up their heads, and the heirs of glory entering into the Heaven of heavens in the higheſt.

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* See Aretin's letter on M. Angelo's painting of the Judgment.

I hear their voices ſhouting forth hallelujahs, like the vioce of many thunders or the ſound of many waters; ſinging, *Dominion and power and honour and glory and bleſſing to the Lamb that was ſlain, but now lives, and lives for evermore; for he is worthy and hath redeemed us by his blood, out of every tongue and kindred and people and nation, and made us unto our God kings and prieſts for ever. Amen!—Alleluiah! for God reigneth with us, and we are come to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb!*

May GOD grant that he who writes, he who reads, and he who hears theſe things, may ſo lay them to heart, that we may all be found among this happy number on that day!—And now, to him who is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us blameleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy:—to the FATHER who loved, to the SON who redeemed, and to the SPIRIT who ſanctifieth us—be glory and majeſty and dominion and power, world without end. Amen!

THE END.

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